

# LONDON READER

of Literature, Science, Art, and General Information.

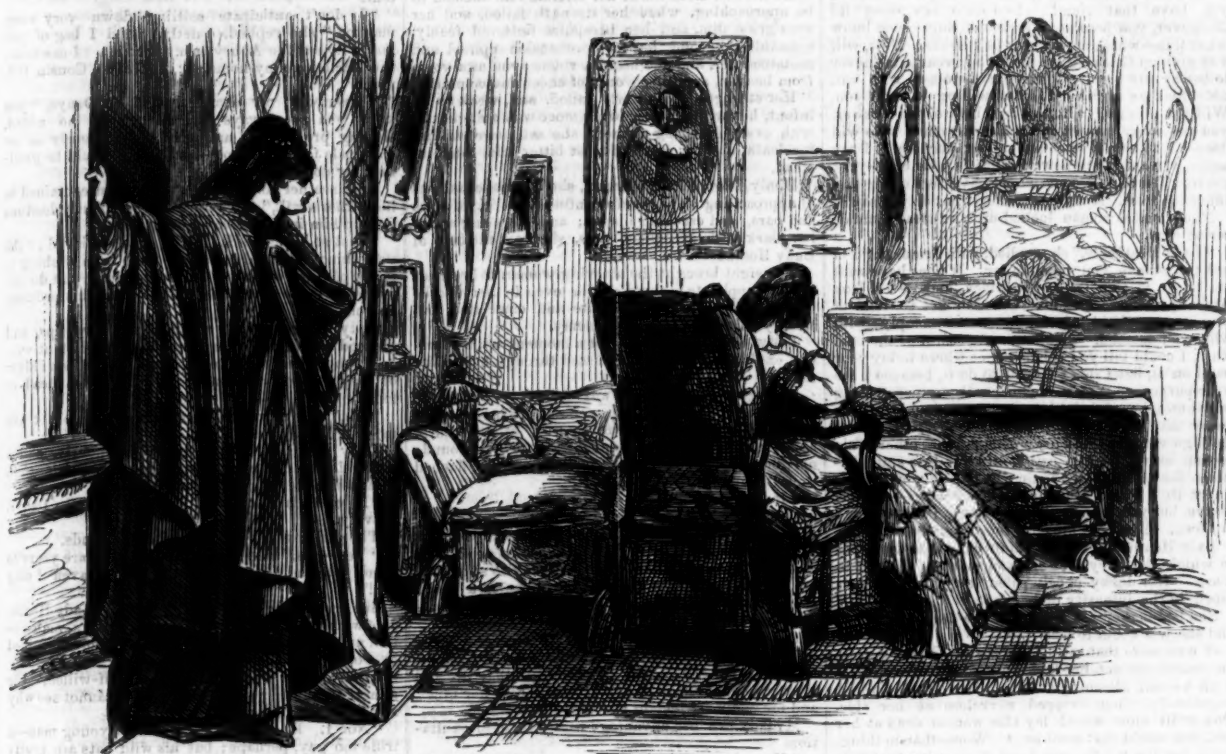
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[WITH INTENT TO MURDER.]

## THE MYSTIC EYE OF HEATHCOTE.

### CHAPTER XI.

Virtue is bold and goodness never fearful.

Measure for Measure.

WHEN Margaret Seaton regained her senses, after the terrible events which we have already recorded, she found herself in total darkness, and her instantaneous conclusion was that she had been buried alive!

For the space of a moment the horrible thought made her so faint and dizzy that she sank back into a state of semi-unconsciousness; but, by degrees, her strong hold on life began to assert itself.

Her brain, naturally clear and vigorous, resumed its proper functions, and all the latent strength and endurance of her muscular frame battled fiercely against the helpless lassitude which seemed to hold every nerve in her body under subjection.

She lay prone upon the floor—a stone floor without doubt, for as she began to move her limbs she could feel the cold flag-stones beneath her.

After one or two ineffectual efforts she succeeded in lifting herself to a standing position; if she was in her grave they had fashioned her a roomy one.

The idea brought a grim smile to her lips, and she began to grope forward on a tour of exploration.

For twenty feet perhaps she shuffled on, breathing the thick, impure atmosphere, her head throbbing and whirling, and great balls of phosphorescent fire seemed to dance and flash before her distended eyes.

At last her outstretched hands came in contact with a wall—cold, reeking, and alive with creeping vermin. She drew back with a shiver of disgust.

Where was she?

For a few moments she stood motionless, pressing her palms against her burning eyes. She could catch the distant drip of falling water, and once a bat, or some other hideous winged thing, hurried across her face.

She withdrew her hands and started forward again, her footsteps sounding with a hollow echo in the ghastly silence.

Accustomed to the darkness, it seemed to grow less dense, and she could dimly discern the outlines of her prison.

Four massive walls, green and damp, a ponderous, bolted door, and one window closely barred and shuttered.

Not a solitary ray of light from the living world could penetrate the terrible place, yet it was not wholly dark, a kind of phosphoric brightness, a luminous something, quivered and wavered through the murky gloom, revealing the dark, dripping walls, and the reeking floors covered with loathsome insects, and bloated, speckled toads, and slimy reptiles.

Gazing round this place, poor Margaret grew faint with horrible apprehension.

To linger, and starve, and die in that abode of darkness was a fate too horrible to be contemplated.

She paused in her walk, and, sitting down upon the floor, crossed her arms over her knees, and leaned her head upon them with a moan of despair.

Never before had life and liberty seemed so sweet as now, when, in all probability, they were cut off from her for ever.

She felt in sudden surprise or bewildered in regard to the sudden fate that had befallen her.

From the first moment of her consciousness she had her belief in regard to its cause, and all her surmises only tended to confirm and strengthen that belief.

"Yes," she said, bitterly, "I can trace her hand through it all, and I needn't look for any mercy. I told her secret, and she'll have my life for it. She's got the best of the fight at the very outset. Well, well, I think I have the courage to meet it; it won't be shortening my days a great deal anyhow. But my darling, my pretty little white dove, left all alone in their culture clutches! Ah, pitying Heaven, 'tis the thought of her that makes my heart bleed."

Two days passed, and Margaret Seaton had not

tasted food or closed her eyes in sleep, and her iron frame began to weaken and relax. Her limbs trembled and refused to support her, and a dull roaring filled her ears, and a filmy something, darker than the gloom of her prison-house, obscured her sight. Sitting there in the gloom, chilled to the very heart by the grave-like dampness, she pondered over her terrible fate, and strove to prepare herself for the slow but certain death that awaited her, until thought became torture, and her over-wrought mind sank into a kind of unconscious torpor.

She did not hear the hollow footsteps that rang through the mouldy corridor without, only the harsh creaking of the opening door, accompanied by the sudden flare of a lamp around her; and, starting to her feet, she stood face to face with Lady Heathcote.

For an instant neither of the two women seemed to breathe, but stood like two images carved in stone—Margaret white and rigid with surprise and horror, and her antagonist looking out from beneath her gray cowl with eyes that glared like living coals. The next moment she had thrown it back, revealing her queenly head with all its dusky braids, and her dark face lambent with wicked exultation. Advancing a step, she laid her jewelled hand on Seaton's arm, and said, with a taunting laugh:

"Is it war still?"

The words brought Margaret to her senses, and all her old Cornish blood leaped up in hot defiance. An angry flush mantled her cheek, and her steel-blue eyes flashed like an unsheathed sword.

"Yes," she answered, steadily, "it is war still!"

My lady quailed for an instant beneath the keen glance.

"The fault is yours, not mine," she said; "you forced me into this; now you must meet the consequences."

"I meet and defy them!" replied Seaton, sturdily.

Lady Heathcote grew somewhat nerveless and uneasy. She had nerved herself to go through this task, but it was growing more difficult than she had anticipated. Nevertheless she had no thought of retreat.

"Even now," she continued, instantly resolving to change her tactics, "we might be friends. Indeed, my object in coming to this place is to make an effort to induce you to listen to reason. We have spoken of these matters before, but perhaps we may come to an understanding now. I am Lord Heathcote's widow, and I have a right to know what became of that old opal ring, and also where he concealed all the treasures of the Abbey. You alone hold the key to this secret, for, in that old ring, so says St. Denys Delmar, the spot where the treasures lie buried is specified. Margaret Seaton, you have that ring! You dare not deny it! Moreover, you possess a secret of mine—you know what it is—which must never be revealed. Now, will you give up that ring, and will you swear to me never to betray my secret? You are a woman who will not break an oath, and I am willing to trust you. Will you do this? Remember, before you answer, you are in my power, and I am a woman who will dare all things to accomplish her purpose. I say again, you are in my power. Here is your call—your grave. Death will come slowly and terribly in this thick darkness. Margaret Seaton, what do you say?"

The Cornishwoman looked up with steady, unfaltering eyes.

"Lady Heathcote," she replied, with firmness, "I'm not the woman you take me for. It goes hard with me to die in this loathsome place, and never look again upon the faces I love, but I'm not so fond of life, or so afraid of death, as to comply with what you demand. I do know the secret of the opal ring; I could tell you this moment where to lay your hand on it, but I don't intend to do it, because I see your purpose. You mean to cheat my poor young lady out of her rightful inheritance, and, unless I can know that revealing it will benefit her, the secret shall go with me to my grave. As to that other affair—your secret, as you call it—if ever I do stand beneath the shining sun again, the whole world shall know it. There, you may do your worst—torture, starve, but you cannot make me speak; my tongue's my own. You hear me once for all, madam."

Lady Heathcote met her unflinching gaze with eyes in which the very fires of pandemonium seemed to blaze. Her dusky cheek paled, her very lips whitened, in the intensity of her rage.

She had staked her all in this one desperate game, and she was about to lose.

It was more than she could bear. With a swift movement she put her hand to her bosom, and drew forth a small, gleaming stiletto. Her hand quivered impatiently, then dropped nerveless at her side. One swift blow would lay this woman dead at her feet, but would that avail her? Worse than nothing, for in her life lay the sole hope of securing that hidden wealth which she must have to accomplish the one object of her life.

Her present possessions consisted of unavailable property, and Colonel Ludovic Hershaw could only be won by gold. She must have the hidden treasures; without them she should fail—and to this woman to fail meant to die. She turned towards Margaret with a look of wild entreaty.

"Woman," she gasped, "you are human—you will think better of this. I will not be rash; I'll give you time to think. In three days I will come again and hear your decision. Here is food to sustain your life until then; but, Margaret Seaton, beware how you refuse me a second time!"

She turned, and, gazing after her for an instant, Margaret saw the beautiful, fendish face glaring through the rusty bars; but beyond, in the dim twilight of the outer corridor, she saw something else that made the hair rise on her head and the very blood in her veins curdle—a tall, spectral figure, clad in trailing white, and a face more ghastly than churchyard ghost ever wore before.

My lady slid the last ponderous bolt, and turned from the living grave in which she had entombed her victim, and Margaret heard a wild shriek of terror that filled every corner in the old dungeon with hideous echoes.

For an instant she stood transfixed with horror, then, despite her fear, her agonized fright, by the light of the lantern which Lady Heathcote had either accidentally or purposely left she turned to the small basket of food with an eagerness she could not repress, but the act brought a hot flash of shame to her cheek.

## CHAPTER XII.

Beautiful tyrant! Send angelical!

Romeo & Juliet.

Two weary, tedious days had dragged by since Lady Heathcote's visit to the dungeon, and the third one had come. But to Margaret Seaton, sitting there in the darkness, there was no hint of day or night; all time was merged into one dull, rayless present.

The little lamp which Lady Heathcote had left burned dimly for a few hours, casting a lurid glimmer

over the green, reeking walls and slimy floor, then, the oil being exhausted, the light faded out, and the poor prisoner was again left in total gloom.

She had devoured her last morsel of bread, drained the last drop of wine, and the slow pangs of starvation began to assail her. Her throat grew dry and husky, her eyes burned and throbbed, and the blood in her veins seemed alternately to seethe like liquid fire and to congeal into rills of ice. Her tortures were inexpressible, and she prayed earnestly for death!

As the last moments of her terrible fate seemed to be approaching, when her strength failed, and her eyes grew dim, and her life-pulse fluttered feebly, something beyond her comprehension upheld and sustained her, and she heard a voice, even as a voice from heaven, speaking words of cheer and comfort.

Her strength had utterly failed, and weak as an infant, her white face growing more wan and ghastly with every dragging moment, she sat there waiting for death, but her last and most bitter trial came instead.

Dimly, like one in a dream, she became conscious of approaching steps, then a confused rattling of bolts and bars, and creaking hinges; and, towering above her, dark with malignant hate, she saw the face of Lady Heathcote.

The sight brought the starving woman to her feet, not to supplicate for mercy, for even in her death-throes she was a hero. White and emaciated, but sternly calm, she faced her enemy.

Lady Heathcote glared for a moment with gloating exultation. Then she hissed through her white teeth:

"Margaret Seaton, is it war still?"

But Margaret could not speak one word in response; her parched tongue clove to the roof of her mouth, and her burning lips parted, but gave forth no sound; only her steel-blue eyes, fiery and unsubdued, flashed back the answer:

"It is war still!"

Lady Heathcote laughed scornfully.

"I warned you of this," she said; "I told you how slowly and terribly death would come to you in this place. You see it now. Are you ready to submit to my conditions? It is not too late even now, and I am here to offer you life and liberty. Will you accept them?"

For the first time poor Margaret wavered. The sudden transition from despair to hope made her as weak as a babe. A swift vision of all that life and liberty would restore to her flashed across her mind, and for one brief instant she stood irresolute.

My lady saw her advantage with a thrill of exultation.

"Here is food," she said, uncovering a small basket she held in her hand and displaying its tempting contents to the famished woman's eyes, "and my hand in token of future friendship. Margaret Seaton, speak!"

The woman's eyes fastened with a glance of piteous longing on the food, but with one last effort she called up her iron will. A sudden fire mantled her emaciated cheeks and glowed in her hollow eyes.

"I will not speak," she replied, sternly; "what I said at first I say last."

A terrific spasm of rage and disappointment convulsed Lady Heathcote's face, and with a swift movement she snatched a stiletto from her bosom.

"Die then!" she hissed. She made a desperate plunge forward and the gleaming blade sheathed itself in Margaret's breast, but ere she could repeat the blow, or make sure of her work, a hollow, unearthly voice rang like a trumpet:

"Woman, beware!" and, turning sharply, Lady Heathcote stood face to face with the spectre of the Abbey.

Her cry of terror as she fled through the doorway and down the black corridor without awake a thousand terrific echoes, and with the sound ringing in her ears, and the ghostly figure and pallid death-face before her glaring eyes, Margaret Seaton dropped senseless.

## CHAPTER XIII.

Conscience doth make towards of us all.

Hamlet.

MEANWHILE at the Italian palace the spring rosebuds were beginning to unfold their crimson splendour, and Lady Heathcote and her friends talked about returning to the Abbey. St. Denys Delmar was anxious to set out at once, but Lady Heathcote insisted that their departures should be deferred for a fortnight at least, until that dreadful icy chill had been thawed out of the English air.

The old Abbey was desolate enough in summer, but covered in a shroud of snow it was unendurable.

"Not that I wish to disconcert you, my dear Lord Remington," she added, turning to the young earl, who was dawdling at the window by the side of Lady

Beatrice; "my poor, dear Lord Heathcote thought there was no such place in the kingdom, but, dear me,—of all the old ghosts' nests! The very thought of returning gives me the horrors. As soon as you are married and settled down, Gracie, my love, I think I shall run back to Italy for good. I cannot get used to England."

His lordship flushed dark red while her ladyship was rattling on, and Lady Beatrice arose and disappeared through the open window. Lady Grace glanced up from her embroidery with chilling haughtiness.

"I don't anticipate settling down very soon, mamma," she replied, quietly, "and I beg of you not to live at the Abbey on my account. I can make the Anchorage my home. Isn't it so, Cousin Delmar?"

"Assuredly, my dear," replied St. Denys, "you know you are always welcome; yet," he added, sighing profoundly, and glancing anxiously at her cold, pale face, "I hope—that is—I would be gratified, my dear—"

To see her comply with the request contained in her father's will," put in my lady, evidently desirous to help him in his embarrassment.

"Just so," replied St. Denys, much relieved; "the very thing I desired to say—I have been wishing to speak of it for weeks. Gracie, my dear, you do not intend to make your dead father break his promise, do you?"

Lady Grace grew white to the very lips, and glanced with terrified eyes towards the distant window where the young earl stood. A sudden shiver of disgust and aversion thrilled her from head to foot.

"Oh," she murmured, entrancingly, "do not ask me—surely, my dear father did not mean it."

Lady Heathcote's eyes blazed ominously, and a smile, that seemed made of malignant satisfaction and disappointment, curled her scarred lips.

"It was his last will, my dear," said St. Denys, gravely.

The girl covered her face with her hands. "Yes—yes," she gasped, "but there are years to come yet, and I swear to you, my Heaven I may die!"

She arose and glided from the room. Lady Heathcote watched her, staring something like a malediction under her breath, as she saw that she was joined by Colonel Hershaw on the terrace.

"Lady Grace was always rather self-willed," she remarked, turning to St. Denys. "I cannot see why she set objects to the young earl."

"Nor I. He is quite an agreeable young man—a trifle too gay, perhaps; but his wild oats are pretty well in by this time, I trow," said St. Denys.

"Quite true," responded my lady. "I confess to a liking for the young nobleman, and I should rejoice to see Grace his wife; but there's time enough yet, and I don't think there is any immediate danger of her fancying any one else. She will go to the convent school next week, and after that I suppose our pleasant party will break up. Dear, dear, how I do dread the return to that old Abbey! But it won't do to crowd all the trouble on your shoulders, St. Denys; 'tis my duty to go over and look after Grace's interests. And speaking of the Abbey reminds me of Nurse Seaton. My last letter from the housekeeper informs me that she has not yet been heard from. St. Denys, what do you suppose can have become of her?"

"I always had a fancy that she knew something about the old opal ring and the hidden treasures," replied St. Denys, "and 'tis quite probable that she took herself off to her friends—she had a brother somewhere on the Cornish coast, I believe. They are enjoying the benefit of the Heathcote treasures, no doubt. I really think it would be proper to investigate the affair, Lady Heathcote."

"But wouldn't you suppose that the reward we offered for the opal ring would induce them to come forward and give it up?" asked my lady, with a peculiar light glistening in her eyes.

"Fear of detection and punishment would deter them, my dear madam; and, besides, if they have discovered the Heathcote treasures, they stand in no need of our reward."

"I suppose not. What an absurd fancy it was with the Heathcotes to conceal their treasures! I have been told that it was a custom in the family."

"It was. For a number of years the Heathcote treasures have been kept in concealment. I had it from the late lord himself."

"Dear, dear, how very foolish! Have you no idea, St. Denys, where all this wealth can be hidden?"

My lady put the question carelessly, but a glow like living fire shot out from her black eyes, and her very finger-tips trembled.

"Not the least," St. Denys replied; "and no one will ever know, I suppose, unless that old keeper-thing can be found. That contains the secret."

"So you have told me before; and that stupid



nurse has disappeared with it. I am sorry for Gracie's sake. There's an old saying with the Abbey folks that with the loss of the 'mystic eye' the glory of the Heathcote race would depart. I hope it isn't a bad omen."

"Oh, I trust not," said St. Denys, cheerfully. "If Grace should marry the young earl, and Heathcote Abbey and Remington Court be united, there'll be no lack of splendour. Well, Maud, my love, what is it?"

"A letter from the Anchorage," replied his daughter, advancing with an open sheet in her hand; "mamma is quite well, and the marquis has given Julie a splendid set of diamonds, and the wedding is to come off in June. We shall have to hasten home, you see, my dear Lady Heathcote—and, oh! papa, what do you think?" she added, with animation. "The young Duke of Connaught is to join us this summer, and we go to Switzerland to meet the marquis and Julie. Charming, isn't it? Of course you will join us, Lady Heathcote. Mamma has the programme all laid out."

"Mamma is a capital diplomat," laughed St. Denys, pinching her bright cheek.

Maud pouted and shook down her bronze curls.

"Don't be naughty, papa," she said; then went on, gaily, "She says if Grace would only consent to join us with the Earl of Remington, and you and Beatrice, and Lord Glandore, we should be the nicest party of the season. Let's see, who else shall we have?"

"Sir Ruthven Remington," suggested her ladyship. "Of course, and Colonel Hornshawe—we can't do without him—"

"And Victor Lenoir," put in St. Denys.

But pretty Maud brought down her slippered foot decidedly.

"No, indeed, we don't want Monsieur Lenoir; the party is to be quite select, and—"

"My dear daughter has set her mind on the Duke of Connaught," interposed St. Denys, mischievously.

"Oh, papa, how can you be so naughty?" pouted Maud, turning to consult her letter. "I shall tell mamma all about it when we get home. She'll scold you soundly too. But, dear me, Lady Heathcote, the strangest things are happening at the Abbey!"

Her ladyship grew deathly white, and made a frantic clutch at the letter, but Maud went on:

"Mamma says: 'I drove over the other day, and found the entire household topsy-turvy—Mrs. Chadwick, the housekeeper, as bad as the rest. They are seeing ghosts continually, and hearing the most unaccountable sounds. Johnson, the lodge-keeper, avowed that he had seen the spectre of the Abbey for three successive nights. The whole of them were on the point of leaving, but I persuaded them to stay. However, there's no telling when they may take wing. Say to Lady Heathcote it would be well for her to hasten her return.'"

"What a set of simpletons," laughed St. Denys, but he added, "I think we shall do well to return at once, Lady Heathcote."

My lady made an effort to speak, but her white lips refused to give utterance to a sound, and she shook like one in an ague fit.

St. Denys opened his eyes in amazement.

"Oh, I am so dreadfully stupid," she explained. "These terrible stories shock me so—don't laugh, St. Denys—but I half believe that old Abbey is full of ghosts. Well, I must do my duty. We will go soon—as soon as I run across to Paris, and get Gracie established in school. You may tell your mother to expect us quite soon, Maud."

#### CHAPTER XIV.

They laugh that win.

Othello.

The long, low drawing-rooms were all aglitter with bloom and splendour. Lady Heathcote was giving a quiet little party on the very last evening of their stay. To-morrow the pretty palace would be closed, and the gay guests would depart, and Grace would go to the convent, and the others back to England.

The music of a waltz thrashed through the blossom-scented air, and one by one the guests began to fill the dancing-hall. Lady Heathcote, and her daughter Beatrice, were yet in their own apartments.

"Your prospects could not be more brilliant, my dear," her ladyship was saying. "Lord Glandore is one of the first noblemen in the realm, and Glandore Court is unsurpassed for magnificence; besides, he has a summer villa in Switzerland, and a mansion in London. You will perceive that you are making no bad match, my dear. Here are the diamonds. Lord Glandore put them in my hands when he made his proposal, and he begs that you will wear them to-night, if you favour his suit. See this coronet; isn't it magnificent? Shall I put it on you, my love?"

Beatrice stood silent, her face white and gloomy, gazing with absent eyes at the glittering gems as she slipped them back and forth through her slender fingers.

"My child," urged her mother, "you cannot afford to refuse this offer; you may never have another such, and you must remember that your sole dower is your wonderful beauty. Be wise, my love, and make yourself what you deserve to be—the first lady in England."

Beatrice smiled darkly with a bitter expression in her eyes.

"Be it so, then," she replied; "but remember, mother, this is your work, and whatever the consequences may be, you will be answerable."

"I will,"

"Then array me for the sacrifice."

Silently and swiftly Lady Heathcote obeyed, setting the gleaming coronet upon the queenly brow, and clasping the gorgeous gems about the swan-like throat and on the dainty wrists.

Then, resplendent as Cleopatra when she went forth to meet Mark Antony, Beatrice went down to meet her lover.

Leaving her on the threshold, Lady Heathcote sped away in the direction of the greenhouse.

Up and down amid the dim, odorous shadows paced Colonel Ludovic Hornshawe.

"Ludovic!"

The voice was the very expression of mingled fear and adoration.

The colonel turned sharply.

"Ah, is it you, Carlotta?"

There was a latent impatience and vexation in the exclamation that brought the fire to Lady Heathcote's eyes, and made her jewelled fingers clutch nervously at a tiny dagger concealed in her bosom. But, suppressing her emotions, she approached him smilingly.

"Ludovic," she said, letting her hand rest on his arm, "our party breaks up to-morrow, and I go back to the Abbey."

He confronted her with a cool, defiant look in his gray eyes.

"Well?" he said, drily.

"Well!" she echoed.

And for the space of a moment they stood thus, eye to eye, he cunning and defiant, she palpitating between hope and fear.

"Ludovic Hornshawe," she questioned then, "are you planning to deceive me a second time?"

He laughed, his face full of coarse, brutal scorn.

"Of course not," he replied, tauntingly. "I am simply waiting—are you ready to make me master of Heathcote Abbey? Have you uncoiled the hidden treasures?"

"I shall soon be ready to make you master of the Abbey," she replied.

"And what becomes of Lady Grace and my Lord of Remington?"

"That is my concern."

"So it is. By Jove, you're a wonderful woman, my Queen Carlotta."

"I am a woman who never forgets, Colonel Hornshawe," she slowly replied, her eyes burning like living coals; "and remember there is a wrong between us two which must be righted one day, or washed out with blood! I have sworn it!"

"Nonsense, Carlotta; do you fancy that an old soldier like me can be frightened by a woman's threats?" laughed the colonel.

She regarded him for an instant in wordless wrath, her very lips whitening with the intensity of her passion, then all of a sudden she broke into a wild storm of tears and sobbing.

"Oh, Ludovic," she entreated, going down on her knees before him, "have pity on me! You put this work into my hands, and I have toiled at it for years, more for your sake than my own, and now that the end is near will you cast me off?"

"Why, no, who says I will?" he cried, impatiently; "don't be foolish, Carlotta—get up, and let's shake hands and be friends; you and I cannot afford to quarrel. Get your work done and I'm your man; but I beg of you not to treat a fellow to such tiger-cat scenes as this in the meantime. Run back to the parlours now, your guests will be searching for you."

My lady arose and obeyed him without a word. The colonel uttered a prolonged whistle as she departed.

"That woman's a fiend incarnate," he muttered, striding up and down. I must cut loose from her somehow—and I must watch her, too, or she'll swoop down on my pretty little dove before I know it. I must have the Heathcote wealth, but I don't want her with it—the day of her glory's gone by. But sweet little Gracie—ah me! she's the charmer! Ah, here she comes."

Gliding along with noiseless footsteps came a slender, white-robed figure, almost as fair and impalpable as the spring moonlight that streamed around her.

Colonel Hornshawe caught a glitter of golden tresses and a faint perfume of heliotrope, and drew

back into the shadow of an old aloe, holding his very breath.

Lady Grace, for it was she, entered the greenhouse, and dropping down on a rustic seat drew a little travel-worn letter, bearing a foreign post-mark, from her bosom.

Her guardian had only put it into her hands a few moments before, and, divining whence it came, she stole out into the dim, odorous greenhouse to read it.

Her fingers fluttered nervelessly as she broke the seal, and her blue eyes gleamed like stars as they ran down the boldly written page.

It was from Carlos Brignoli, the companion of her childhood. He was doing well, working out his grand achievement, as he expressed it. "By-and-bye, little Gracie," he said, in conclusion, "I shall come back to you, bringing both wealth and honour; and in the meanwhile I shall love you, oh, my beautiful darling, I shall love you so entirely, so madly, so unchangingly, that Fate herself will relent and annul the cruel decree that separates us."

Lady Grace read it over and over again—this impassioned, boyish epistle—a soft flush suffusing her cheeks, and a mist of tears blinding her happy eyes. Then she kissed the lines his hand had traced, and, hiding the precious missive in her bosom, fell into a reverie.

A young girl's first rosy love-dream!

From behind the mystic old aloe Colonel Hornshawe watched her with wolfish eyes. After a little space he came out, confronting the shining face with apparent surprise.

"Why, my dear, you here?" he cried, coming to an abrupt halt. "You appear the very soul of the moonlight, so silent and radiant. Won't you take a little promenade? These dim aisles are delicious."

Lady Grace was happy, and true happiness always makes us kind and unselfish. She arose, and, accepting his proffered arm, walked beside him up and down the marble-paved promenade which ran through the fragrant greenhouse.

They could hear the silvery fall and plash of waters, and, between the swirls of music, the rustle of the orange groves, and the melody of nightingales. The girl's poetic soul swelled with ecstasy. The colonel looked down into her lovely face with impassioned eyes.

"Lady Grace," he murmured, softly clasping the slender hand that rested on his arm, "you are happier to-night than when we last met—isn't it so, my little friend?"

Grace looked up with overflowing eyes.

"I am very happy, Colonel Hornshawe," she replied. "It doesn't seem that I shall ever be miserable again."

"I am so glad," he said, pressing the dainty hand between both his own; "you cannot know how it troubles me to see my little friend unhappy."

"You are very kind, Colonel Hornshawe."

"Am I?" smiled the colonel. "Well, 'tis the last time I shall have a chance to be kind to you for a long while, little Grace. You go to school to-morrow, but you'll suffer me to be your friend?"

Lady Grace inclined her golden head.

"I am so much older than you are," he continued as they walked up and down the promenade, all unconscious of the dusky eyes that watched their every motion with fiendish glare. "I can be of service to you if you will allow me. Lady Grace, I have been keeping a sharp eye on the young Earl of Remington, and I am more than ever convinced that if your dear father were alive he never would consent to see you marry such a man. I speak of this to-night, my child, because I may not see your bright face again for years, and I have your happiness at heart. You do not love the Earl of Remington, do you?"

"Love him! Oh, Colonel Hornshawe!"

The colonel smiled at her passionate gesture of aversion.

"Then do not suffer them to force you into an unholy marriage with him," he said. "Disregard the command of your dearest friend, even set aside your father's will, sooner than wed with one you do not love; believe me, my child, marriage unsanctified by love is torture. I know, and I warn you."

Grace looked up quickly, and something in the man's yearning, regretful face touched her heart.

"You are very good, Colonel Hornshawe," she said, gently, "and I will remember what you say. But to-morrow I shall strive to forget all these things, and for a year at least devote myself wholly to my books. You must visit the dear old Abbey quite often. I know mamma will find it very dull. I must bid you good-bye now. I shall look in at the dancers for a moment, then go to my chamber. I'm in no mood for gaiety."

But her eyes were luminous, that little travel-worn letter, resting above her heart, had flooded all her future with sunshine.

She held out her dainty hand, and the colonel clasped it in both of his.

"Good-bye, my dear little girl," he said, his voice husky and tremulous; "this parting costs me more than you dream—but let that pass. If you ever need a friend, Lady Grace, you will find me true and tried. Heaven bless you, little one!"

And, stooping, he pressed a kiss on her brow, and strode away.

For an instant the girl stood bewildered, then a sudden blush suffused her cheeks, and she shivered with a sensation of disgust and terror.

The touch of the man's lips seemed like the contact of some loathsome reptile. She put her hand to her brow as if to wipe the plague-spot away, then with slow and lingering steps she turned towards the dancing-hall.

#### CHAPTER XV.

Screw your courage to the sticking place.

Macbeth.

Mr Lord of Glandore and his betrothed, Lady Beatrice, were amid the dancers, whirling gracefully down the long hall to the measure of a waltz, the Glandore diamonds glittering on the brow of the beautiful *fiancée* like so many points of flame.

"What a charming couple," remarked Lady Clydesmore, pausing a moment for breath, and addressing her companion, who chanced to be the young Earl of Remington. "Glandore Court need not wish a fairer countess than our Lady Beatrice will make—only look at her face, my lord, 'tis really brilliant."

The young earl needed no bidding to look at that face, he was already staring, with a heavy frown on his brow, and a purplish flush on his sallow cheeks.

"Egad," he muttered, dropping his companion's hand abruptly, and striding away, "what a lucky scamp Glandore is—I could shoot him with a will. He can afford to marry a penniless wife; but I'm so confoundedly pushed for cash that I'm forced to take that little milk-and-water Heathcote for the sake of her fortune. Just my luck! Why couldn't old Heathcote have divided his wealth, and given me one half, and the girl the other, then we might have followed our own wills! As it is she hates me quite as earnestly as I do her, and when we're man and wife a nice time we'll have of it, I'm thinking."

Pausing in his rapid walk just beyond the entrance, he came face to face with the object of his thoughts. She was passing him, unconscious of his presence it appeared, her fair face wearing a wrapt and dreamy look; but he caught at her arm, just the least bit roughly.

Lady Grace wheeled round on the instant, her blue eyes blazing.

"Lord Remington, how dare you?" she cried.

"A desperate lover dares everything, my pretty one," he retorted, coarsely. "I've been trifled with long enough; I want your hand for the next dance." "I shall not dance again to-night. Take your hand from my arm, sir, and let me pass!"

Her voice rang like a trumpet, and the old Heathcote pride and spirit, fully roused for the first time, curved her scarlet lips and flashed in her eyes.

The young lord of Remington gazed upon her with newly awakened admiration.

"By Jove!" he blurted out, at last, his hand still on her arm, and his bold eyes on her face; "I didn't believe it was in you to fire up so! I like that. Always give me plenty of mettle in a horse, or in a woman. There's no fun in the taming process unless one gets a fiery filly in hand. But come now, softly, my little one—you and I can't afford to fall out. There goes my favourite waltz—now we go!"

He drew her arm through his own and turned towards the dancing-hall; but in an instant she had wrenched herself from his grasp.

"Lord Remington," she said, her voice thrilling with indignant anger, "for weeks since my father's death I have been in doubt whether to obey his last will or to follow my womanly instincts, but this last insult received at your hands has decided me. Had you treated me with respect and manly courtesy I might have suppressed my feelings of dislike, and in time been brought to obey his request, and possibly to regard you with kindness; but this uncalculated brutality, sir, has ended all between us. My father did not know you, or that last clause would never have been added to the Heathcote will; and I tell you now, sir, once for all, that you never will be my husband, or lord of Heathcote Abbey!"

With the last words falling from her tongue like silver bugle-notes, she turned, and swept down the long hall with the air of a queen, and the half-drunken young nobleman looked after her with bated breath and distended eyes.

"Egad!" he ejaculated, at last; "this is coming it too strong! Suppose she means what she says! I can't afford to let the Heathcote treasures slip

through my fingers in this way. But there's more ways than one to win a woman."

Meanwhile Lady Grace fled on until she reached her own chamber; once there, she double-locked the door, and, throwing herself upon her couch, gave way to a storm of passionate weeping. In a little while she became calm, then sat down to think.

Could she abide by what she had said? Dare she, the last of her race, disobey her dear father's will? The very thought of such a thing thrilled her with terror. But the alternative—to become the wife of that brutal, dissolute man! She could not—would not—death would be a thousand times preferable!

And at that moment, rising and falling with every thrill of her young and passionate heart, was his letter—her lover's—and he far out upon the treacherous ocean, exposed to death and danger!

She drew the little travel-stained missive from her bosom, and, smoothing it on the table, read and re-read it again and again. Then she took the pearl-set miniature from her jewel-case.

What a frank, handsome face it was!—the fair, Saxon hair clustering round the noble brow, the blue eyes full of love and aspiration. Just the face for a fond young girl's ideal!

Lady Grace gazed upon it, her own eyes glowing like sapphires, a rich flush mantling her pearl-fair cheek. How she loved him! Ah! why could she not fly to his side, wherever he might be, and share his wanderings, leaving all her troublesome wealth behind her?

At last, still seated in the great rocker, the young girl's fancies merged into a dream, and she fell asleep.

Meanwhile, in another chamber, in a remote wing of the old Italian palace, sat Lady Heathcote. It was a small room, fitted up in the manner of a laboratory, and had formerly been used by Signor Brignoli, my lady's first husband.

She sat before a queer, semi-circular table, which was littered with innumerable phials and packages. One of these phials—a tiny, crystal affair, filled with a whitish kind of mixture—she held in her hand; and just beyond, half concealed by a slender sheath of pure gold, was a tiny dagger, or stiletto, long, and bright as a ray of light, its antique handle richly set with jewels.

She sat with the crystal bottle in one hand, while her basilisk eyes were riveted on the dagger with a kind of fascination. Presently she put forth her hand and took it up.

"'Tis as well now as later," she murmured; "and the deed's surely to be done—she and I can't live and breathe in the same world, since Ludovic Hershaw has made up his mind to love her. Oh, the gray-haired hypocrite, to break his faith with me for that painted doll! But I'll pay him back, and in his own coin too. Did ever I fail when my mind was set to accomplish my purpose? Why, then, should I fail now? Yet I grow weak and tremble at the thought of my task. I am growing old and imbecile, I believe—I, who was once Queen Carlotta!"

A vivid scarlet leaped to her dusky cheeks, and her eyes glowed like flame, while the fierce throbs of her heart shook the folds of the dark robe she wore.

"Queen Carlotta," she murmured; "and he brought me down! He made me a shame and a byword among my people by his treachery and deceit, now he would play me false again. By the avenging Heaven, he shall not! She shall die! How dare she cross my path! Lord Remington has enough, and will do better without her. Come now, Queen Carlotta, call up thy old courage! One little touch with that shining point and the work is done, and no tales told. Hark! what was that?"

It might have been a mouse in the wainscot, or the rustle of a flitting bat. Whatever it was, the slight sound drove the blood from her cheeks, and made her shiver like an aspen.

But the moment after, with an angry exclamation, she caught up the dagger again, and, uncorking the crystal bottle, she dipped the glittering point into the whitish mixture. Then, concealing it under her mantle, she left the laboratory, carefully locking the door behind her, and fled ghost-like through the dim silence till she reached a broad hall than ran through the suite of apartments in one of which Lady Grace slept.

Here she paused and passed her hand cautiously over the smooth surface of the walnut panels. Her fingers came in contact with a spring, which, yielding beneath her touch, the panel slid noiselessly aside, and, with the dagger in her hand, Lady Heathcote passed through the aperture into the chamber in which Lady Grace sat in dreamy sleep.

(To be continued.)

MR. C. W. JARVIS, who was recently mulcted in the penalty of 5*l.*, at the Ilford Petty Sessions, for using armorial bearings on an envelope without a licence, has, after a correspondence with the Com-

missioners of Revenue, succeeded in obtaining an entire remission of the fine awarded against him.

THE death is announced at the advanced age of 98, in Jersey, of a veteran named William Peters, who was at the battle of Trafalgar with Nelson. He was a native of Banwell, Somerset, but was in the employ of the Bristol Custom-house for many years, and for some time also lived at Axbridge. The deceased worthy was somewhat extensively known in Bristol and Somerset.

A VERY handsome gold casket has been prepared by Messrs. Hunt and Roskell, jewellers, of New Bond Street, to be presented shortly to Lady Burdett-Coutts by the Corporation of the City of London, in commemoration of the transfer of the Columbia Market to them. It will be handed to her ladyship with the resolution of the Market Committee, which it is intended to enclose.

PEWS IN PARISH CHURCHES.—The Rev. Edward Stuart, of St. Mary Magdalene's Church, Munster Square, has written a characteristic letter, couched in strong language, to the Bishop of London, finding fault with that portion of his late charge in which he spoke of pews in our parish churches. Mr. Stuart may be described, the *English Churchman* says, in Dryden's lines on the Duke of Buckingham:

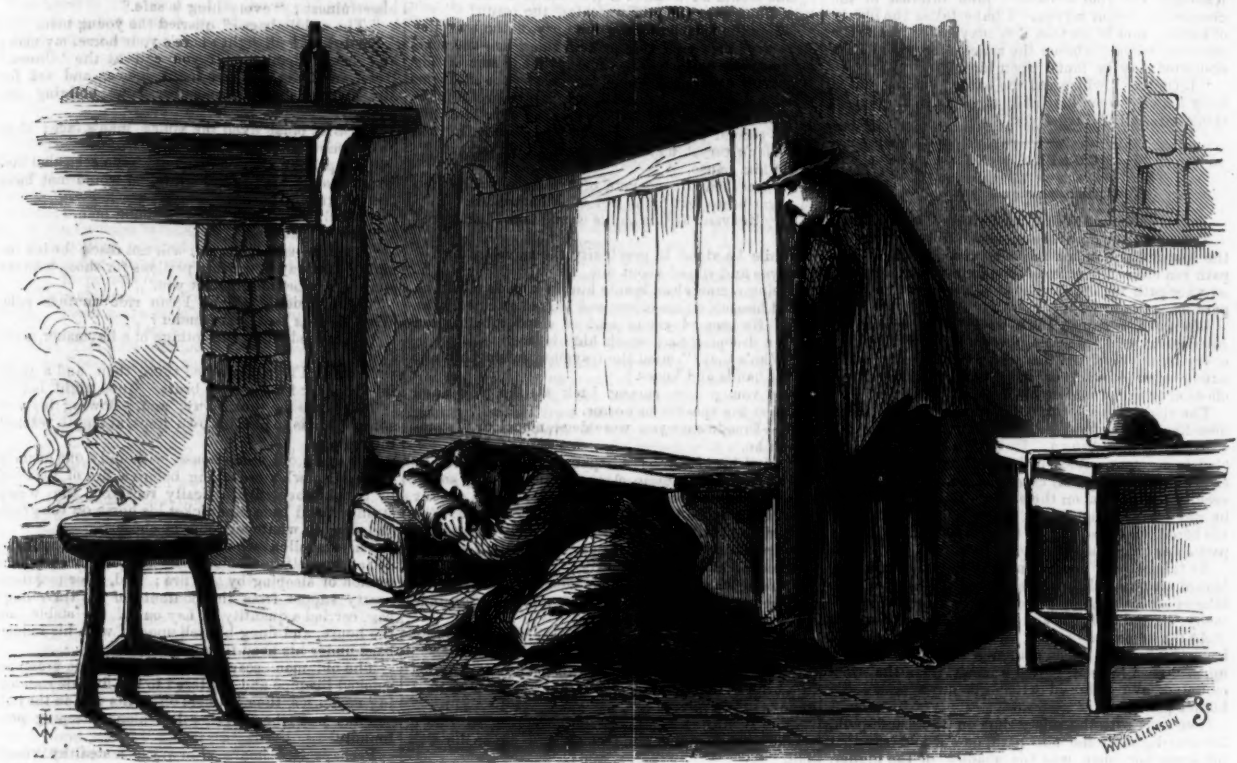
"Railing and praising were his usual themes,  
And both to show his judgment in extremes."

He is one of those gentlemen who ride their favourite hobbies too far. If the motto of the Wesleyans "The World is my Parish," were assumed by the Church of England, then by all means have all the churches open to the first comer. But as long as the parochial system (of which the Bishop of London was speaking) continues to be the strength and glory of the national church so long ought the parishioners to have a priority of access to their parish church. It were well to have had the abuses of selling and closing appropriated seats exposed and extinguished. But true wisdom lies in avoiding extremes, in so arranging about pews that parishioners should have a priority of place, and no exclusive nor dog-in-the-manger possession in their attendance on the services of their parish church.

GEOGRAPHY AND TOPOGRAPHY IN FRANCE.—It is said that the French government, impressed by the want of thorough geographical instruction, has under consideration a plan for a Geographical Institute, on a scale which has never before been attempted. The proposed institute is to include all the means and accessories of geographical education in its widest acceptance—books, maps, charts, globes, instruments, collections of natural objects, etc., and to include a staff of professors and teachers of the highest grades. The naval depot of charts and plans will form one of the departments of the new institute, which promises to be of eminent service, not only to France but to the whole of Europe, for should it be established on the scale proposed there is little doubt that it will give an impulse to geographical study throughout the civilized world. In connection with this subject may be mentioned the reconstruction by the Minister of War of the corps of Geographic Engineers. This corps will be employed, in conjunction with the *Etat-Major*, in topographical works, and as guides in time of war. Orders have been given for the complete revision of the *cadastre*, which has not been corrected since 1810, and during sixty years the changes that have taken place in the face of the country are of course considerable.

THE ORTON FAMILY.—The house in which the eldest Orton and his descendants lived is not far from Wapping Old Stairs; it stands on the right hand side of High Street, Wapping, 69 being its number. It is an ordinary-sized, four-storeyed dwelling, with a low-fronted mean-looking shop below, in which the business of a bootmaker is now carried on. Near it is the "Union Flag and Punch Bowl," which was much frequented by Arthur Orton. At No. 69, some twenty years ago, old Orton was doing a tolerably good business as a butcher, chiefly serving the ships in the river. He was reputed to have amassed a large fortune out of it. At this time the family consisted of Mr. Orton and his wife, several sons, including Charles and Arthur, and two daughters. Charles assisted his father pretty well, but Arthur did not, and preferred any kind of occupation to that of a butcher. Arthur was the youngest son, and the old man had a partiality for him; besides, he was the best looking and best favoured of the family, for he was not born with the traditional hump-back peculiar to the rest. This hump was a strange affair. Old Orton had it, Mrs. Orton had it, and an Orton who had it not was scarcely regarded by the neighbours as one of the family. Arthur's favourite house of resort was the "Union Flag and Punch Bowl." His principal companion was a young man named Field, who was some time back drowned in the river. Of his many associates few now remain, but there are two who affirm that they could swear to him, living or dead, by a certain strange mark left by a wound in his left leg, how received they do not say.





[THE ASSASSIN.]

## VICTOR AND VANQUISHED.

## CHAPTER X.

As when a spark  
Lights on a heap of nitrous powder,  
The smutty grain  
With sudden blaze diffused inflames the air.

Milton.

HEREWARD dined with the baron and his daughter upon a dinner which would have won the appreciation of a French gourmand; but as he sipped wine with his fair enchantress, then noted the grim, icy smile of his host, he could not help thinking of the deceitful stillness of a serpent coiled for springing.

He spent the evening in the Italian garden with Lucia, and she showed him her prettiest gold-fish, and taught him the language of flowers, and a little astronomy, and also some other things which he never forgot. But at last she left him at what he thought a miraculously early hour, yet when he consulted his watch he found it within an hour of midnight. So he went back to his chamber, plunged in a dream of enchantment, and lived his evening over again.

He had been asleep for some time when he was awakened by a low whisper close to the pillow:

"Master Hereward! Master!"  
"Hullo! Who's there?"  
"Hush, hush, sir! You must speak low."  
"Oh, it's you, Watt! Where have you been?"  
"There you go, and long ears listening to every word!"

"Who?"  
"L'Ombre. Don't I know that the rascal'll try his best to pay me off? He's jealous, too, of my Gabrielle."

Hereward, now thoroughly awakened, sat up.  
"What buffoonery have you been about?" demanded he.

"A very good night's business, sir. Mademoiselle Gabrielle has been good enough to show me over every inch of the tower, and the chapel, and the dungeon doors—I do so admire old ruins—and I am going to bring her a comb for her pretty hair from London with three gilt pendants—she said three, but I wanted six—and if I can but get a ring small enough to fit that slender finger—"

"What folly are you talking, Watt? Is it to hear this you awakened me?"

"If you would but wait for my explanations, Master Hereward. Well, well, sir—don't go to sleep again—I have found the secret passage and the key—come along!"

"The secret passage!"

"Yes, sir; and you must dress quickly, and let me

lead you down a private staircase to the chapel, and behind the sacristy is an iron door, and after that a long stone passage, and after that the secret door, and the chain of caverns leading out to the sea-shore. I've been over the ground, and know it all."

"But, Watt—"  
"Quick, quick, my dear master; I have some trifles in my pockets, by which to remember our pleasant visit here—to wit, a silver inkstand and a pair of snuffers from Mounseer Lumber, and a lock of sweet Gabrielle's back knot—not to mention the old fox's piece of gold—"

"Watt, I say—"  
"Yes, yes, master, so you shall say as much as you like when we're clear of the tower; but it must be acts first, words afterwards, for I don't doubt but that mounseer is sniffing about with that long nose of his—"

"I say, you rascal, you have forgotten one thing."  
"Ay? Just name it, and I'll find a way to do it, if it should be to slitting off old Chastelard's ears."

"You have forgotten our parole!"  
"By the wheels of Juggernaut, what has that got to do with it?"

"We have given our word of honour—"  
"Then, when I am tempted, and I say I will yield, I must keep my word? Truth, they say, lies in a well; let it be there until you and I can find time to fish for it. Dear, good Master Hereward, surely you'll attempt the escape?"

"Begone! you blockhead, and let me have peace. Would you have a Kentigorne forswear himself?"

"But, kind, good, dear master, the baron will find out before the end of three days that you're not Lord Hereward Chamountel, and Mr. Cavendish will be at the village on the fourth with your papers, and if he should let out your business, and the baron should hear of it, you'll never leave the tower alive. On my knees I beg you to take care of your own precious life."

"You have imperilled your safety too often already for me, Watt; look out for yourself now that you have the chance of liberty, my faithful fellow."

Slygreen flung himself upon the floor with a smothered howl of indignant disappointment, in the midst of which Hereward turned over and fell asleep.

Morning saw Watt sedate as ever, moving about his master's apartments, and calmly ignoring last night's episode as if it had never been, for he had determined to consult his master no more upon so important a matter as his escape.

Morning saw Hereward in the Italian garden, loitering on the terrace, enjoying the pure air, and—the smiles of the baron's daughter.

"Ah, there you are, by the very urn where I left you last night. Have you ever moved?"

"Corporeally, madam."

"Upon my word, very prettily done. Who taught you flattery, my brave chevalier?"

"Dear lady, do I flatter when I call this camelia white?"

He plucked it, and with trembling fingers offered it, and she, with an arch assumption of superior age, fastened it in her velvet bodice.

"There, does that please the boy? How earnestly, how profoundly he watches. My dear, you will some day make a very pretty courtier. Come, shall I teach you?"

How young did she suppose he was? The youth's cheek flushed with pique and pleasure mixed, but he clung to his enslaver all the more.

Morning also saw M. L'Ombre waiting upon his master with a communication of very great importance; while he, yellow-visaged, ill-slept, snarling as a mongrel dog, sat in his many-tinted dressing-gown, and listened.

The valet quickly gave an account of the conversation which had taken place on the previous evening between Hereward and Slygreen, stating that he had overheard it by listening at the door of their chamber.

He spoke of Slygreen's plans of escape, and Hereward's refusal to profit by them and thus violate his parole.

"When urged to escape," continued L'Ombre, "he answered, indignantly, 'Never! Would you have a Kentigorne forswear himself?'"

"Ah!" hissed the old man.

"After this, my lord, Watt urged that you would discover in three days that Monsieur Hereward was not the son of the Duke de Chamountel; also that Mr. Cavendish was to be at the village on the fourth, which is as you know to-morrow, with monsieur's papers, at whose arrival monsieur must inevitably become known, when your lordship would never suffer him to leave the tower alive."

"Ah!" rasped the baron again from his crooked throat. "Papers? Yes. Go on."

"There is nothing more, my lord, except that Monsieur Watt refused Monsieur Hereward's offer of freedom, and began to lament in a very noisy manner. I waited long for more to be said; then came away. Monsieur Hereward is now walking in mademoiselle's garden, with her; and the detestable villain Watt is still arranging his master's room."

Knowing well your lordship's kind interest in the characters of your servants, I have taken the liberty of locking him in, so that you may order him to be searched, when doubtless the articles for which I am suspected may be found upon him."

"L'Ombre!" whispered the baron, holding out a bony finger, "come here and let me talk to you. I think, after all, I'll trust you."

#### CHAPTER. XI.

What are you?  
Your name, your quality?

Edmund is dead, my lord. *Shakespeare.*

THROUGH the night shades which fell dewily upon the low marsh-lands a traveller was hurrying. His path ran under the ridge of mountains, but there was another path upon the summit of the ridge, running parallel.

His horse, a gaunt, town-bred brute, unused to his present work, and in a pitiable state of fright at every fresh object on the misty bridle-path, alternately sped onward or held back, as his fears checked or urged him on his course.

The rider was a stout, elderly man, with a business-like air, a fresh-coloured face, and close-cut whiskers of dark brown. He sat his horse well, was clad in a glossy green riding suit, and carried his saddlebag with peculiar care. Indeed, all his anxiety seemed centred upon the safety of its contents, for he was perfectly sudiditior to the frequent panics of his horse, except so far as they displaced this, the particular object of his care.

As this solitary horseman rode slowly round the foot of a sudden cliff, which formed the neck of two intervals, his animal, glancing from side to side uneasily, started violently and bounded off at full speed.

At the same time a man, who had been reclining beneath a tree on the edge of a bluff overhead, got up, stretched himself, untied a horse from the tree, mounted, and followed after the stranger on the higher path.

Seen thus with the misty rime on the marsh-path, the star-light on the cliff-path, one would say that the lower horseman was the shadow of the higher, only that the man who followed wore a loose black cloak.

On they went—these indistinct groups—with a mechanical exactitude in all their movements which was ghastly.

When the traveller below stopped to peer about him for the object of his animal's terror, or to consult his watch, the traveller above stopped too, and clasped his horse's neck that he might not be seen. When the traveller below set spurs to his horse to make up for lost time the traveller above sped along with muffled feet.

"What a sorry brute you are!" muttered the stranger, at last losing patience, and dismounting to examine his steed. "I would rather ride a hog through a potato-field! What's the matter, Kingcup? Why, nag, your nostrils are quivering with fright, and you've bolted three times since we entered this abominable marsh! Never mind; your journey is nearly over for the night; we'll reach Kentigern's village by noon to-morrow. Let me see—does your bit cut? No. Is the saddle all right? Of course it is. Come, boy, we'll try another stretch!"

He remounted, and trotted on beneath the cliff. At every few steps the horse snorted, looked about with glaring eyes, or, with ears flattened and neck outstretched, rushed breathlessly onwards.

Again the traveller stopped, and this time, sitting in his saddle, listened intently.

"Strange!" muttered he, "but I am positive that I hear other horse's hoofs besides yours, Kingcup, whenever we move on; yet, when we stop, there's no such sound. Can it be an echo? Hardly; the cliff is too broken and irregular for that. Ha! do I see something up on that ledge? A horse's head? Hallo!—who goes there? It's nothing and nobody."

For the second time he struck his horse and urged him forward. The cliff under which he was riding began to break into deep cuts, through which the fresh breeze from the ocean came in gusts; at one place a creek ran in, and, curling round the bridle-path, made a long, narrow canal at one side, the cliff on the other.

Having come to the opening of a new interval, the traveller stopped and scanned it anxiously in search of some friendly inn; a faint glimmer of light shone redly through the mist like a gloomy spark.

At the moment of his stopping the horseman in the cloak stopped also, dismounted, crept stealthily to the edge, and looked over.

The traveller was directly beneath him. Apparently satisfied, he grovelled among the coarse herbage, until he found a large stone, raised it above his head, and flung it down with all his strength. It missed its aim, struck a shelving piece of rock, and, ricocheting, plunged into the sheet of water.

One would have called it the face of a fiend which now hung over the cliff watching the result.

When the splash and the loud cry of the traveller were over the horse galloped off riderless—the man lay senseless on the road. The spy made sure of this before he clambered down the face of the cliff—he stood motionless and made sure again before he ventured to come near. Then he stooped over him, and for a second his long, pointed fingers touched the traveller's throat under his cravat, but a thought made him pause.

He searched the pockets of the unconscious man in eager haste, but found not what he wished.

"By Heaven! if this be the wrong man!" muttered he.

While he stood in perplexity the traveller opened his eyes and stared about him.

Seeing a man close beside him in a wide cloak, he raised himself on his elbow and looked attentively at him. He seemed young and of slender build, and wore a drooping hat, which hid his face.

"Who's that?" cried the traveller, raising himself on his hands and knees.

The young man sprang back at the voice and gazed at the speaker in horror.

"I—I made sure you were dead, monsieur," stammered he.

"Am I hurt? What's happened?"

The young man came close to him, holding something behind him tightly clasped in his small, sinewy hand, and, instead of answering, bent over him. The attitude was so hostile that the traveller raised himself from his hands and knees to a kneeling posture and looked at him suspiciously.

"Hey! what do you want?" demanded he.

The young man shrank back, and losing courage retreated again.

"Are you very much injured, sir? I—I merely wish to be of service."

"No! I'm none the worse, except for a bump on the back of my head, which stunned me a little I fancy. Help me up."

The young man thrust that weapon so like a snake's tongue, under his cloak, and did as he was bid.

"How came you here, my man?" demanded the traveller, instinctively becoming aware that he addressed a mental.

"I saw monsieur's horse throw him, as I progressed up yonder, and hastened down, fearing there had been mischief done."

"The rascal! he has been threatening me ever since we came down into these benighted valleys. Was it you I heard on the cliffs above?"

"I think not, sir. I have come from the opposite direction, and am going to Radesdale."

"It must have been the Evil One himself then; where's there an inn near here?"

"There's none within five miles."

"Fest! and I have a sprained knee! what am I to do?"

"Could I pursue your horse, sir?"

"Thanks! but 't would be one thing to pursue, another to catch. Kingcup hears no voice but mine, and see how he has treated me!"

"The animal must not be lost, monsieur," said the young man.

"No, indeed! I could ill brook that!" exclaimed the traveller, earnestly.

"Doubtless he carries effects of importance; monsieur's money and papers, perhaps?"

"Humph!" grunted the traveller, with a distrustful look; "of course he has my wardrobe in the saddlebags; and there's himself, neither of which I care to lose."

"Certainly, monsieur! would monsieur permit me to try to capture the horse?"

"He won't come to a stranger, and you can't catch him. Oh! if I could only get near enough to let him hear my whistle! but I can't stumble over these swamps with a sprained knee."

"If monsieur would mount my horse, and follow his own, he might capture him."

"But you're going to Radesdale you say?"

"I am in no haste, sir; besides, you are helpless."

"Why, then, you're an obliging lad, and I'll gladly accept your offer."

The young man returned to where he had left his horse, and led him down. Then he assisted the stranger to mount, and saw him trot off through the misty lands.

While he was left alone he walked restlessly round and round, in an aimless circle, his hat in his hand, and he seemed plunged in an agony of indecision. He was startled by a long, piercing whistle-call. He clapped his hat on, and stopped as if shot.

"Malediction!" muttered he, "he is summoning the horse; why should I fear? But am I on the right man?"

In a very short time the traveller came trotting back, holding Kingcup by the bridle.

"No harm done," cried he, restored to perfect cheerfulness; "everything is safe."

"The saddle-bags?" queried the young man.

"All right! all right; here's your horse, my man; and many thanks. If you call at the 'Crown' Hotel in Radesdale two days hence, and ask for Mr. Cavendish, I'll remember your obliging behaviour."

A scarlet blush dyed the young man's face; then he became yellowish white.

Perhaps, if the traveller could have seen that distorted change from red to white, he would not have been so gratified.

"I shall call," mumbled the young man.

"Good night then."

"But, sir—monsieur, you will not reach the inn to-night; the way is terribly perilous for those who are strangers. Let me conduct you."

"Faith, I don't believe I can ride another mile. What light is that over yonder?"

"It proceeds from the cottage of a haymaker, monsieur."

"I think I'll try for a bed there then, and a rackful of fodder for my poor brute. Good night, lad."

This time he got away, and, allowing his now sobered horse to pick his own steps, at length reached the cottage.

It was an old stone house, with only one man in possession, who, crouching before a fire of logwood in the kitchen, apathetically received the weary stranger, and bade him picket his horse on the grass, and sleep in whatever room he chose.

The traveller, who seemed capable of accommodating himself to all circumstances, declared his intention of sleeping by the fire; and, after making a hearty supper from the contents of his travelling-bag, carried a quantity of hay out of the stable into the house, and flung himself upon it, with his saddle-bags under his head for a pillow.

The old man, scarcely conscious of his presence, smoked his pipe and muttered to the fire his wandering memories, then hobbled off to his nest in the loft.

Thus was the traveller left alone sleeping profoundly.

Perhaps two hours afterwards a stealthy visage peered in at the thick-paned window, and marked the sleeping man, with a red glow from the embers falling upon him.

The face watched, intent as a cat; its long, silky mustaches curled, its teeth gleaming hungrily, then it was withdrawn.

Afterwards a hand tried the door, but found it stoutly barred; tried the window, but found it stoutly nailed.

A long silence, then a distant creak of boarding in the house, and a creeping footstep. A hand with long, dextrous fingers—ah! surely we have seen that hand before!—pushed open the door which communicated from the other apartments into the kitchen, and the figure in the wide cloak glided in.

So light his step, so shapeless his form, you would have thought him only a shadow!

He looked at the weary man with an eye of horror, and his heart throbbed to bursting lest he should awaken.

But the traveller had ridden far, and being hungry had eaten well; and, being both clear of conscience and fearless of nature, slept on.

The shadow turned, and, taking off his cloak, hung it across the window; then stuffed the keyholes with paper, and again, in spite of himself as it would seem, looked at the sleeping figure.

How awful a spectacle he was to that guilty intruder, even in his helpless unconsciousness!

The embers glowed tenderly upon his flushed face; the blood coursed warmly through his uncovered throat; the brown locks curled damp and ring-like about his forehead.

To be so calm, so glowing this hour; and the next—

When the old man came down from his loft at dawn, and opened the kitchen door, he was caught by a violent choking sensation, which almost suffocated him.

When he recovered there lay the stranger, still undisturbed.

"Up, up, sluggard! Would ye sleep with the sup on your face?"

How gray his cheek was!

How sunken his eyelids!

How death-like his repose!

Death-like inasmuch as it was death itself.

What had killed him?

The brazier of charcoal told no tale to the ignorant old man.

Who was he?

There was nothing in his pockets by which to identify him.

The saddle-bags under his head contained but a suit of clothes.



Robbed?

The purse in his pocket and the horse still picketed under the window forbade the idea. What—what had killed him?

(To be continued.)

## SCIENCE.

THE projected railway for uniting the two lakes of Thun and Brienz is a matter determined. It is expected that the line as far as Interlaken will be finished by the first of July.

ARMOUR-PLATE ROLLING.—Messrs. Cammel and Co., of the Cyclops Works, Sheffield, have just succeeded in rolling, without the slightest defect, the largest armour-plates ever made. The plates are intended to protect the turrets of the great war ship "Devastation," which is being built at Portsmouth. Each plate weighs 24 tons, and measures 20 feet in length, 9 feet in breadth, and 8 inches in thickness. The time occupied in rolling one of these plates and bending it to the required form was under two hours.

THE "WOOLWICH INFANT."—The great 35-ton gun which goes by the name of the "Woolwich Infant," and which possesses the early developed forces of an infant Jupiter Tonans, was fired again the other day, and hurled its 700lb. thunderbolt at an initial velocity which would have carried it seven miles. Considering that the last child of the arsenal is cracked, its constitution will, nevertheless, maintain a creditable reputation for strength while the infant can belch forth its fiery material with power enough to send a shot a distance as far as from North Fulham to Mile End, East London.

AN AMERICAN "INFANT."—An immense gun has arrived in Tophane from America, which, if the makers do not over-rate its qualities, rivals the famous Woolwich gun in endurance. It is a 35-ton Rodman cast-iron gun, cooled by a peculiar process, while in progress of casting, and it is said, that it will stand 1,000 rounds. It is mounted on a novel construction which enables it to be easily manipulated by one man by the aid of steam machinery. Great difficulty was of course experienced in landing the monster. A still larger one, however, is coming from America, but as yet no steamer has been found capable of carrying it.

HAYWARD'S PATENT PAVEMENT LIGHTS.—The ordinary description of pavement light allows the rays on entering to disperse equally in all directions, so that only part radiates inwards. In Hayward's patent light the reflecting face of each glass is at such an angle as to send the rays of light into the basement in a direct line from the front. The cast-iron frame of this light is composed of a series of hexagonal recesses, into which the lenses are set, the surface of the glass being a little below the upper edges of the iron net-work, which presents a firm foothold. These lights can scarcely fail to come into extensive use.

THE VENTILATION OF ROOMS.—The necessity, says a correspondent, of ventilating the rooms of private houses, to get rid of the foul air produced by gas-burning, is so universally felt, and the failures in the usual systems are so numerous, that I feel you will be pleased to hear that a mode adopted in my new house has proved quite effectual, as well as perfectly simple and inexpensive. In building the chimney-breasts, in each room a half-brick was left out at one side, next the wall, for the whole height; and on a level with the floor an opening was left from the channel through to the chimney. A length of ordinary rain-water piping was then fitted throughout the channel, with its top end open near the ceiling, and its lower end open (through a hole cut inside of stove) above the hearthstone, and under the fire. The plaster, of course, covered all but the top opening, where a small grating was fixed. The total cost was about 7s. per room. The action of the ventilator is simply that the draught up the chimney draws the air down the pipe, and consequently carries off the impure air floating about the upper part of the room. It does not act while the door of the room is open; but when the door is shut (the time when ventilation is needed) the draught is so great that a light applied to the lower end is at once extinguished.

EXPERIMENTS IN THE MONT CENIS TUNNEL.—Pendulum experiments for determining the gravity of the earth are about to be made in the Mont Cenis Tunnel by Father Secchi, M. Diammiller-Müller and M. R. P. Deuss. These will be made first in a lateral chamber about the centre of the tunnel, and will be afterwards repeated at the corresponding vertical point on the mountain, the difference of level being about 1,600 metres. In addition to these observations they propose to determine the earth's magnetism and the temperature of the strata to which they can obtain access. By preliminary observations they have ascertained that the passage of the trains will not, to any serious extent, inter-

fere with the precision of the observations. Telegraphic wires will be laid down for the purpose of chronographic registration, and the observing chamber will be ventilated by special air conduits.

TEST FOR HUMAN BLOOD.—Dr. Day confirms the discovery of Neumann that the pattern or network which human blood exhibits when evaporated on the slide of a microscope will serve to distinguish it from the blood of any other animal. The blood to be examined is spread on a glass plate, put on the stage of the microscope, and the stain observed until coagulation has taken place. Human blood shows a pattern of small network; the blood of other animals—the calf, pig, etc.—requires more time for coagulation, and yields a much larger pattern; in fact, every animal appears to furnish blood of a characteristic and peculiar form. Not only is this the fact, but blood from different functions of the body is peculiar and capable of comparison and distinction. Scientific men have carried this investigation so far that blood stains can be traced to their source, and murder often discovered.

CHANNEL COMMUNICATION.—A company has been registered which is called "The Channel Tunnel Company (Limited)," for commencing the work of making a tunnel from near Dover to a point near Calais. The capital of the company is 30,000l., which is being privately subscribed, with the immediate object of making a trial shaft, and driving a driftway on the English side, about half a mile beyond low-water mark, with the view of proving the practicability of tunnelling under the Channel. The completion of this work will furnish data for calculating the cost of continuing the driftway from each shore to a junction in mid-Channel; and capital will then be subscribed for that purpose, or for enlarging it to the size of an ordinary railway tunnel, as the engineers may deem most expedient. Lord Richard Grosvenor is chairman of the Committee of Management. The tunnel will be made through the lower or gray chalk chiefly, if not entirely; and, by the adoption of machinery of which the promoters of the company have made practical trials recently, it is expected the passage can be opened from shore to shore within three years from the time of commencing the work, and at a cost very considerably less than any previous estimates.

## CREUSE'S STABLE AND TASTELESS MEDICAL COMPOUND OF IODIDE OF IRON.

THE iodide of iron is one of the most important and useful curative agents known in pharmacy; but, as heretofore made, its compounds have a harsh, inky, disagreeable taste, so bad that many patients are unable to use them. They also blacken the teeth, and, in some cases, produce constipation.

The object of Mr. Creuse's invention is to provide a stable and tasteless medical compound of iodide of iron, by combining the sesqui-iodide of iron with a vegetable salt.

The sesqui-iodide of iron, though very unpleasant and even caustic in taste, has the property of combining with various vegetable salts, forming compounds almost tasteless, which may, it is claimed, practically be kept unaltered any length of time.

The vegetable salts found to have such an effect are the citrates, the tartrates, and the oxalates of potassa, soda, ammonia, and lithia, or any mixture of these different salts. Of all these, the combination of sesqui-iodide of iron with citrate of potassa has been selected as the best suited for medicinal purposes, though the right to use any is allowed in the patent.

The solutions of the iodide of iron thus obtained must be kept from direct sunlight, and protected by either sixteen per cent. of alcohol or a quantity of sugar sufficient to make an official sirap.

## AN ARTIFICIAL VOLCANO.

PERMIT me to explain a method by which this interesting imitation of volcanic action may be produced by any of your readers interested in the matter. Sulphur has not only the property when melted of absorbing steam, but will absorb other gases, and especially a gas produced by melting it with any wax, fats, or oils containing the elements of glycerine. It is probable glycerine may do as well, as sulphur decomposes and absorbs it when heated with it, leaving no residue as fats do, and giving out a similar gas when cooling; but as my experiment (when I unfortunately succeeded in producing a capital imitation of volcanic action, chains of mountains being formed, and craters here and there ejecting their liquid contents, which, running down the sides and becoming solid as it went, closely resembled the flowing of the lava in a volcanic eruption, while the hissing of the gas from the vents still more kept up the illusion) was performed with sulphur and tallow I had better keep to that. Take then several pounds of sulphur, the more the greater the effect, and heating it in an iron vessel until it is on the point of igniting, add tallow to it a little at a time, stirring the mass well with an iron rod till the tallow has decomposed, and forms a viscid scum, which must be removed, and the process re-

peated, until the sulphur is saturated with gas (by the way this gas may be condensed into a clear liquid under pressure), and loses its property of thickening by heat, turning brown. Now pour it into a vessel not too shallow, and, as soon as a crust is formed, the eruption begins. I have said "unfortunately" succeeded, for when the volcanic performance was over my casting, which was intended to be homogeneous and solid, was nothing better than a honey-comb. Does this resemblance to natural phenomena extend so far; is the crust of the earth nothing better than a cellular shell?—H. H.

## THODE.

"I THINK I may say that Oscar is my favourite son."

Mrs. Courtney spoke with a certain marked decision. There was a decided distinction in her silvery sweet tones and graceful air as the lady stood in a bow window among her flowers and thus addressed her guests.

"Quite natural," murmured Mrs. Standstedt, glancing towards the piano, where Oscar Courtney sat.

Under the cover of his brilliantly executed music the group at the bow window continued their conversation.

"Theodore has been a great disappointment to me," continued Mrs. Courtney, as if pained to make the confession.

"No doubt," murmured Mrs. Standstedt, sympathizingly.

"If I only could have had a daughter! How old is Vera?"

Mrs. Courtney lifted the golden curls of a young girl who sat on a low seat near them.

"Vera is sixteen."

The ladies looked at each other over the beautiful head and smiled. Then Mrs. Courtney looked down again at the lovely profile and lily-white hands loosely clasped on the silken lap.

"Vera, dear, may I take you with me to Northwood this summer?"

The blue eyes looked up with a smile.

"If mamma is willing."

"I shall be quite willing," smilingly replied Mrs. Standstedt, "if you'll finish your German, Vera, this spring. One must keep one's young folks fagging until their education is completed. Do you go to Northwood every season, Mrs. Courtney?"

"We intend to. But last year we spent the entire season at the mountains—for Oscar was out of health."

The fourth person of this group had not spoken—Mrs. Matthews. She was a grave, silent lady, with singularly soft, yet penetrating eyes—so quiet a person that she was apt to be overlooked in a company. She had not known Mrs. Courtney long, but she had seen both her sons, and Theodore had interested her more than Oscar.

As the sound of the piano ceased, and the group broke up, Mrs. Matthews made her way slowly through the crowd and passed out of the room. She went down a hall, crossed a vestibule, and lifted the curtain of a niche. Within was a window, and a boy sitting upon the broad ledge, rigging a miniature ship.

"Thode, I thought I should find you. Were you not coming to see me?"

"I didn't know you were here, Mrs. Matthews," said Thode.

He was a dark, strong, but rather undersized boy for sixteen. Yet the face was mature for the years, and the brow singularly massive.

He forgot to offer Mrs. Matthews the chair by his side—Oscar would not have forgotten—but she took it, looking at him with singular sweetness.

"Mother never wants me in the drawing-room, and I don't know as I care about being there," said Thode. "Did Vera Standstedt come?" he asked, after an instant.

"Yes," was the answer, with a quiet, penetrating glance. "Miss Vera is here. Are you going to let her go away without speaking to her?"

"Oh, I don't know her at all," said Thode, carefully adjusting some noisety of his rigging. "But I've seen her often dancing, and in the carriage. She looks like a picture of Spring I saw in a gallery in London."

"Thode," said Mrs. Matthews, "before you leave town will you come and see me?"

Thode's wide black eyes rested for a moment on her face.

"Why, I'm not the company boy, Mrs. Matthews, it's Oscar."

"But I want you. Will you come?"

Thode nodded.

"Good-bye now," she said, laying a motherly hand on his shoulder. "I'll tell Miss Vera what an exquisite little ship you have rigged," she added, lingering long enough to see the boy's face light up brilliantly at her last words.

Mrs. Matthews had a quiet, unostentatious house

in another part of town—not but what she was wealthy enough to have supported a fashionable establishment, but such a home would not have suited her.

Her cosy rooms were full of comfort and afforded material for thought and enjoyment. She had three children, much like herself in character—nauts, generous, sunny-tempered—two sons and a little daughter of seven.

She wanted to give the unloved boy a place in their beautiful social life—for this reason she had invited him to her house, instead of the petted and brilliant Oscar.

And Thode came, once and often. He was rough, ill-mannered at times—some would have called him bold; but Mrs. Matthews's loving eyes saw in these traits the outgrowth of a strong and remarkable character.

He hated insincerity, shams, and cowardice; he had great natural independence, and promptness of action. By precept, but more by loving example, she taught him gentleness, politeness, and modesty. It was a little strange that the younger son of the Courtneys needed to learn the alphabet of social success.

But in three months he went away to Northwood, and she lost her hold on him.

Vera Standstedt went to Northwood also.

Mrs. Courtney was not without a motive in giving the invitation.

Though Oscar was but eighteen, Vera would be an eligible parti, and an early intimacy might be a fortunate thing.

The girl was indeed lovely, with innocent eyes of blue, and golden hair. Her laughing face had a charm for Thode which nothing else in the wide world had ever possessed for him.

Vera smiled on him sweetly, as on every one. He was strangely shy of speaking to her, but her manner was mild and natural to him, as to others.

But Oscar was her friend, her constant companion. The happy voices and golden heads were almost inseparable.

Mrs. Courtney observed that her favourite son had never appeared so gay; but failed to notice that Thode's gloomy moods increased that summer.

Good Mrs. Matthews would have believed that she had made a mistake in showing poor Thode the contrast of love to selfishness—of kindness to coldness—if she could have seen his unhappiness and relapse into roughness and disorder.

He was standing on the steps of the house, looking down the avenue one morning, when Vera came to the open hall door.

"Oh, what a lovely morning for a row in the cove!" she cried.

"I will take you," said Thode, with sudden courage.

He had never in the whole long summer offered so much before.

At sixteen Vera had womanly tact enough to take no notice of that.

"How nice! I will be ready in half an hour!" she cried.

But as she pulled off her wrapper in her chamber previous to substituting her gray boating dress a pebble tinkled against the pane.

She threw a scarf round her shoulders and leaned out of the window.

"Come and row in the cove," said Oscar from under a bush in the garden.

"I am going with Thode."

"Thode? Nonsense! I'll take you. Come, make haste!"

A moment afterwards the two were stealing through the garden.

Thode's boat was as small as an Esquimaux's canoe, light as a cockle shell, thin as a knife-blade. He loved it like a living thing, but he did not un-moor it that morning, for it was unsafe for two.

Should he borrow Oscar's wherry, with her gilded prow and cushioned seats? No, he would ask no favours of Oscar.

There was an old skiff in the boat-house; when its rowlocks were fixed it would do very well. If Vera loved the water as well as he did she would not care for the boat.

It took some time to get the skiff in order. Just as he pushed her into the tide he heard a shout.

He looked up. Oscar and Vera were gliding away from the landing in the beautiful wherry.

Vera's merry eyes were turned on him, as he stood up, panting and flushed with his efforts—Oscar laughed aloud, mockingly; the sunlight glanced on his flashing ears as they passed by.

He was in his chamber, two hours afterwards, when he heard a commotion in the house.

Theodore went to the window and saw that a sudden and furious hail storm had come up. Then a servant rushed into the room:

"Oh, Mr. Theodore, your brother is on the water!"

"And Vera?" asked Thode, quickly.

"No, she's here. He'd put her ashore and gone

back for her hat, which she'd left on the rock out yonder, and now you can't see him for the driving rain, and—"

"And he can't swim!" shouted Thode.

He rushed out of the house.

His mother was screaming in the hall; Vera's frightened eyes met his as he dashed by. The servants were about the beach.

Thode disappeared.

Disappeared into the yeasty tide that foamed around the land, and that almost immediately sank to a great depth. In some places the cove was fathomless.

"Master Thode's gone for him! He'll get him! He can swim like a duck!" the servants called, and the boy, through the hiss and swirl, heard the cry.

As that brave young heart breasted the strife and danger what did the mother hear?

As the storm increased she could not be kept under shelter. She was down on the open shore with the men, the hail beating upon her unheeded, as she tried to penetrate the storm's veil, beyond which her sons were hidden. The crested waves leaped towards her, the thunder broke over her, the lightning played as in a demoniac dance around.

By-and-bye she saw two men coming towards her.

"They have come ashore," they said.

Lower down the beach, beaten aside by the current, Thode had struggled to shore with his helpless brother.

Oscar was unharmed—not even senseless—but Thode lay in the shelter of a rock, with his head on a man's shoulder, his face strangely white—stranger still, he was smiling.

"Hurt inwardly—beaten against the rocks," the mother heard some one say.

He put out his hand to her.

"Good-bye, mother; you've got Oscar, you know, and—"

But the mother fell prone on the sand, and lay kissing the feet of her dead younger son.

E. S. K.

## MYSTERY OF THE HAUNTED GRANGE.

### CHAPTER XVI.

"HERE she is herself!" exclaimed Miss Long, with malicious vivacity; "I've just been telling Samuel of the grand conquests you've made. How are all your friends at the Priory, Polly dear?"

"All my friends at the Priory were quite well when I saw them last, Eliza," responded Miss Mason, promptly. "I'll tell them you inquired the next time I see them; they'll feel flattered, particularly Mr. Guy, who dined with you—once, wasn't it, Eliza? and forgot to come back."

"I didn't encourage him as much as some people might," retorted Miss Long. "I don't believe in gentlemen born dangling after country girls. I should be afraid of what people might say of me," concluded Miss Long, with a virtuous toss of her head.

"Then you needn't, Eliza; nobody will ever talk of you in that way, I'm quite sure. Gentlemen have such bad taste."

"Yes," said Eliza, with an hysterical laugh, "I thought so myself when I saw two of them go by with you. I wonder Rosanna isn't afraid."

"Afraid of what, Eliza? I'll thank you to speak out."

Polly's eyes were flashing now, as only blue eyes flash.

"We all know Polly isn't afraid of anything," cried the young man from the haberdasher's, who was mortally jealous. "She wouldn't go three miles out of her way, as Jenkins did last week, rather than pass the Haunted Grange."

"No," answered Polly, disdainfully. "I would not."

"That's easy to say," Miss Long said, with a second toss, "it's not so easy to prove. Polly's as much of a coward as the rest of us, I daresay, if the truth were known."

"I'm not a coward, and I'll thank you not to say so, Eliza. I'm not afraid of you, or what people may say, nor of ghosts either, if it comes to that."

"Prove it," cried the taunting Eliza, "prove it if you dare, Polly Mason."

Miss Eliza Long understood her antagonist well. To dare Polly to anything, however mad—however foolish—was to insure its being done. Had she not risked her life only last winter, one stormy day, when dared to go out in a boat to the other side of the bay?

And now into Polly's eyes leaped the light that had shone in them then, and her hands clutched together. She looked her adversary straight in the face.

"You dare me to what, Eliza?"

"To pass a night alone in the Grange. You are not afraid of ghosts! Prove it if you dare!"

"Oh, Eliza, hush!" cried Alice Warren.

"You hush, Alice!" Polly said, very quietly. She was always quiet when most dangerous. "I will do it! I am not afraid of ghosts, but if I were as sure as that I am standing here I should see the ghosts of the knight and the lady I would go. I will do it this very night, Eliza Long; will that satisfy you?"

"No, no, Polly!" Alice cried again; and, "Oh, no, you know!" exclaimed the young man from the haberdasher's, in consternation, while stolid Peter Jenkins stared aghast. "Duke wouldn't let you, you know."

"I shall do it!" Polly said, folding her arms, and looking daggers and carving-knives at her enemy.

"Yes," said Miss Long, "and Duke need never know. We're all going to a dance at Bridge's—that's only two miles from the Grange, and I'll tell Duke and Rosanna you're coming with us. We will go with you to the Grange and leave you there, and call for you again when the dance breaks up at two o'clock in the morning. That is, of course, if you really mean to go, you know. I wouldn't let you, if I felt the least afraid."

The words, the tone, the insolent sneer, stung Polly, as she meant it should. She opened the gate, and came out so suddenly and with such a wicked expression that Eliza recoiled.

"I'm not afraid, and I'll thank you not to use the word again. You're a coward, Eliza Long, and you know it, and you hope something evil may befall me, and you would have given a year of your life to stand in my shoes this morning! Bah! don't think I don't understand you, but I'll go all the same."

Eliza laughed, while she grew white with anger. She did not know she was a murderess in heart, but she did hope the ghosts of the Grange might whisk this insolent Polly Mason off to the regions of the Styx, although Miss Long had never heard of that gloomy river.

She ran up to the house without a word, and came back in five minutes to say Polly might go to Mrs. Bridge's dance.

"Don't do it, Polly!" Alice Warren pleaded, in mortal dread; "you don't know what may happen. It's an awful place, and I should feel as if we had murdered you if—"

Polly stooped and kissed her.

"You poor, little, frightened Alice! I don't believe in ghosts, I tell you, and I shall go to sleep as comfortably in the Grange as ever I did in my life. Don't let us talk about it. Eliza Long shall never call me a coward."

It was quite useless talking to Polly when Polly's mind was made up, whether for good or evil.

Her blood was up now, and she was equal to anything. Her eyes were like stars, her cheeks like red berries. As they walked along in the misty moonlight her laugh rang out clear and sweet, her merry voice made people smile and look after her as she went by.

Eliza could have stabbed her, so intense was her hate—her envy. Never mind, let her pass a night in the Grange! People who had tried it, legends ran, had been found stark mad next morning. No one would ever blame her; she had not asked Polly to go.

They passed Bridge's—the town with its noise and its lamps lay behind them—the lonely, open road that led to the Grange lay white and deserted before them.

They passed the cross roads, where, fourteen years before, Duke Mason had lost his way. A little more than a mile and they would be at the Grange.

Still Polly rattled on—a stranger might have said to keep up her courage, but in reality the girl was not afraid.

Hers was a nature singularly free from superstition or fear of any kind. She was not afraid, every nerve quickened with excitement—she longed to show this vindictive rival of hers how superior she was to her taunts.

The great gates—the grim wall loomed up before them at last, and Alice suddenly flung both arms about her friend.

"You shall not go, Polly—you shall not! What will everybody say? and who knows what may happen? Peter, don't let her go—Eliza, speak to her!"

"She may go if she likes, for me," said Peter, boorishly.

"Certainly, Polly, I wouldn't go if I felt the least afraid."

She did not finish the word—Polly turned upon her so swiftly and fiercely.

"You had better not," she said. "Alice, dear, hold your tongue; there is no danger. There are no human beings there, and I am not afraid of the ghosts. None of you need come any farther if you don't wish."

She opened the gates—they creaked and moved



heavily on their rusty hinges—and walked resolutely in.

Mr. Jenkins held back, but the other three followed her, Alice still clinging to her and half sobbing; a fiendish gleam in Eliza's greenish eyes.

They walked up the avenue in dead silence—the unearthly stillness and gloom of the place awed them.

Polly spoke as the house came in view, and her voice sounded unearthly.

"How am I going to get in? There's a window I know of—if you can only raise it for me, Sam."

It was the very window, near the elm tree in which Duke had sat and stared that memorable night.

The ivy made an easy ladder for Mr. Samuel, who, in some trepidation, moved and shook the casement. Wind and weather had done their work—the window went crashing into the room.

Miss Mason turned and faced Miss Long with the look of a duellist waiting to fire.

"Will that room do, Eliza, or is there any apartment in the house more especially haunted than another? I should like to please you, and it's all the same to me."

"Oh, don't ask me," said Eliza, shivering slightly as she spoke; "don't say I want you to go; I don't. I think you had much better turn back."

Polly laughed bitterly. "I understand you, Eliza! If anything happen you must prove your innocence. Good night, all; don't fret, Alice, about me."

She seized the ivy, and, with one light leap, was inside the room. Her dauntless, smiling face looked down upon them from the window.

"Go!" she said; "good night."

"Come," said Eliza, with another shudder, and "oh, Polly, Polly, come back!" came faintly from Alice. She felt as though she were leaving her friend to be murdered in cold blood.

But the others drew her with them, and Polly was alone in the house where, sixteen years ago, she was born.

She stood by the window until the last echo of their footsteps, the heavy clang of the gates, told her they had gone. A great awe stole over her—not produced by fear, but the solemn stillness of the night, the white, spectral light of the moon, the moving of the wind among the trees.

It was like living down among the dead. She turned and glanced about the room. The little old piano stood in its corner, the easy-chair in its place before the black hearthstone, a spindle-legged table, the faded tapestry, the bare oak floor. Through the corridors the wind wailed, overhead the rats scampered.

The girl shuddered for the first time as she listened to them. It was so deathly still that she heard the clocks of the town toll nine. Nine! and she must wait until two or three before they would return. If she could only sleep and dream those long, lonesome hours away. She would try.

She knelt down, her face in her hands, and said her prayers a little more devoutly than usual, then cuddled herself up in the arm-chair.

"Who had sat in this old chair last?" she wondered. She shut her eyes, wrapped her summer shawl closer about her, and tried not to dwell upon the cavalier and the mad lady, not to hear the wind or the rats. She endeavoured to think of yesterday's delights, of tomorrow's bliss, when she would go to Montalien Priory and sit for her picture. She was in love with Mr. Fane—no, with Mr. Guy Earlscount—that didn't know which.

Presently the white lids went down on the purple lustre beneath, and the blessed sleep of healthful youth came to Polly.

She slept for hours. The moonlight flickered in a ghostly way enough across the floor unseen, the rats scampered overhead.

Was it in her dream that she heard the gates clang again, and the footsteps of her late companions drawing near the house? Was it in a dream that she heard footsteps that were not the footsteps of the rats overhead?

She sat up all at once, with a start, broad awake. The moon had gone under a cloud, and the room was in darkness.

What was that? Surely footsteps—human footsteps—along the hall outside and approaching the door.

Yes, the handle turned, the door creaked, and opened!

The girl rose and stood up by no volition of her own, and seemed staring straight at the opening door. Her heart had ceased to beat—she was icy cold all over.

Was this fear? She had consciousness enough left to wonder.

The door opened wide—there was what seemed to Polly a blaze of supernatural light, and in that un-

earthly glow she saw the form of a woman entering and coming straight towards her.

#### CHAPTER XVII.

HAD Olivia, Lady Charteris, really grown utterly heartless? Had she entirely forgotten the child she had deserted fourteen years before? Was she a living woman, with a heart of stone? There were people who said so, people who said her nature was as cold and colourless as her pale, unsmiling face, people who said she loved neither husband nor child. Perhaps those people were right in that last surmise.

Her estrangement from Sir Vane Charteris the whole world was welcome to know, so far as she was concerned. They dwelt under the same roof, they were outwardly civil to each other, the husband indeed more than civil, he was assiduously polite and deferential to his status of a wife; but for all that they were to all intents and purposes as widely sundered as the poles.

It had been so since the birth of little Maud—no one knew the cause. They met by chance—on the stairs, or in the passages—the only places they ever met alone—and the lady swept by with head erect and lashes proudly drooping, shrinking back lest he should touch the hem of her garments. When he addressed her at the dinner-table her answers were always monosyllabic, and she never looked at him.

It was a curious study to watch them—she as cold, as lifeless to him as the Diana of the Louvre, whom people said she resembled; he with the red glow of suppressed fury and mortification rising in the sullen depths of his black eyes.

Whose fault was it? Well, as is generally the case, the wife came in for the heavier share of the blame.

She was an icicle, not a woman. She was a marble statue, not a wife.

Sir Vane—was he not always bland, always sociable, always *debonnaire*, the most delightful of men? But opinions differed.

Those delightful social and brilliant men in public are sometimes intensely selfish and cruel husbands in private; and there was a gleam in Sir Vane's black eyes—an expression about his heavily out-mouth—that made some fastidious natures shrink away from him with repulsion.

Once and once only Lady Charteris had spoken of the estrangement to Lord Montalien, whom she esteemed most of all men she knew, when he had striven—very faintly—to bring about a reconciliation.

"Sir Vane Charteris has insulted me, my lord," Lady Charteris said. "Women of my race have given back death before now for less insulting words. If I were on my death-bed, and he knelt before me, I would not forgive him."

The dark eyes had dilated, and filled with so terrible a light, and over the pale face came a glow so deep, so burning, that Lord Montalien knew she meant it.

He bowed his head and said no more, and from that hour never tried the rôle of peacemaker again.

For little Maud, she was her father in miniature—the same black eyes and hair, the same features, the same nature. She was his idol. She had not a look of her mother, and he exulted in it. She was all his own.

Could Olivia Charteris, hating the father, love the child?

The little girl, clinging to her father, never seemed to have any special love left for her mother.

It was an odd, abnormal state of things altogether, and people were more than half right in calling Lady Charteris a cold, unloving wife and mother.

But the child of her love, of Robert Lisle—that was quite another matter. Her very love for that child had made her give it away to strangers. Had fourteen years stealed her heart there as well?

Duke Mason, standing before her in the twilight of the *fête* day at Montalien Priory, knew better. Such passionate, yearning love as the eyes fixed on the fair young girl expressed he had never seen in all his life before, except once—once, in an upper chamber of a house in Park Lane, where a mother wept over the child she was resigning perhaps for ever.

They stood face to face, there under the green trees of the park, and knew each other. Thus they met again.

Duke turned cold all over as he stood there. The hour dreaded unutterably had come.

The mother had found her child. Her eyes spoke to him; they said "Stay!" as plainly as words. Polly was whirling away in the dance again.

Guy Earlscount was waiting with weary resignation to be led whithersoever her ladyship willed.

They moved on, her dress brushed him, her lips whispered "Wait." They disappeared in the silvery dusk, and Duke was alone.

He sat down on one of the rustic seats and stared blankly about him. The lights, the people, the music, all were discord and tumult. He was overdue at the Speckhaven theatre. What did that signify?

Polly's mother had found her out—was, in all likelihood, about to take her away. Polly!—the light of their household—the joy of his life—who had loved, and admired, and tormented him for fourteen happy years—Polly, who had toasted his muffins, and upset his paint pots, and made fun of his pictures, and worked him pretty neckties, and went singing through their humble home, like some fair Esmeralda.

"I will never give her up," thought Duke, doggedly, "she has no right to take her away. I'll never give the Duchess up unless—unless she wants to go"—and at that thought Duke broke down.

Polly would go—Polly, whose dream of life was to be "a lady"—who loved dress and adornments with the intense love of girlhood—yes, Polly would go.

How brave she was! What a great, generous heart she possessed. People called her vain. Well, perhaps, she was. Her glass showed her a charming face, and she loved beauty in all things. She might be raked at that piquant face, but how bravely she had risked its beauty for those she loved! She was wilful, and wayward, and reckless, and something of a "tomboy," as Eliza Long had called her; but—"Heaven bless her!" thought Duke Mason, and the tears were standing big and bright in his honest eyes; "and if she wants to go she shall go, and I'll never grieve her by letting her see how it breaks my heart."

The summer light had faded entirely out of the sky, and the moon, and the stars, and the Chinese lanterns had it all their own way; and still Duke sat, and waited as patiently now as he had done fourteen years before in the elm tree, for Olivia Lyndith.

A cold hand falling on his own aroused him—the same chill touch that had startled Lord Montalien's favourite son—and, turning round, he saw in the night light Lady Charteris.

She looked like a spirit—so white, so unearthly—her black eyes wild and solemn. She had thrown a scarlet cashmere shawl over her dark dress, and her small face shone from the rich red folds like a wan star.

"Come!" she said—"come with me!"

Her cold fingers still held his hand.

Duke shuddered at their touch. He was in no way fanciful, but just then he remembered legends of pale water-spirits bearing away hapless mortals to their doom.

She led him away from the noise and the people, down a green aisle, in whose sombre darkness a murder might have been committed. One or two red lamps flickered luridly athwart the blackness, and a nightingale piped its sweet, mournful lay somewhere in the stillness.

Even the braying of the brass band came faint and far-off here.

She clasped both hands around that of her prisoner, and the dark, spectral eyes fixed themselves upon his face.

"She is mine!—my daughter!—my child! whom I gave you fourteen years ago!"

"She is,"

"You have cared for her all those years! She has grown up like that—strong, and tall, and healthy, and beautiful—beautiful as he was, and like him, and like him!"

"Well, yes," Mr. Mason responded, thoughtfully, and quite forgetting himself, "she is like him, and when her face is washed the Duchess isn't a bad-looking girl."

"Does she know—who does she think she is?" the lady hurriedly asked.

"She thinks she is Polly Mason, an orphan, the child of a dead cousin of mine. The Duchess hasn't a notion of who she really is."

"The what?"

"I beg your pardon, my lady—I call her the Duchess, because she looks like one—not that I ever was personally acquainted with any duchess," Duke put in parenthetically. "She called herself Polly; but I never took kindly to the name of Polly."

"Her name is Paulina,"

"Yes," said Duke, forgetting himself for the second time. "I know it is. He said so."

"Who said so?"

The solemn, dark eyes were fixed on his face, the friendly darkness hid the guilty red that flushed it at the question.

"Who said so? Who could know her name?" the lady demanded, suspiciously.

"It was—it was a sick man, who stopped with us, when she came," stammered Duke, who never could learn the manners of good society, and tell polite

untruths; "he suggested that her name might be Paulina."

"How should he think of it—who was this sick man?"

"His name was Hawksley, my lady."

Duke's heart was throbbing against his ribs. If she only knew.

"If she asks questions enough she'll surely find it out," he thought, with an inward groan. "I never could stand pumping."

But my lady's thoughts had drifted away to more important things than sick men by the name of Hawksley.

"Why did you leave London?" she asked; "do you know I wrote to the old address twice, and my letters were returned? The last fell into the hands of Sir Vane—and there was a scene;" she twisted her fingers together, as though in pain, "and I never dared write again. I would rather have seen my darling dead than that he should find her out. Oh, my Heaven! if he should recognize the resemblance, and discover her identity, even now. He knew there was a child—he knows I have hidden her away. If he should find out! If he should find out!"

She clasped her hands around his arm, and looked up at him with a face of mortal dread.

"He will not find out, my lady," Duke said, quietly, "if you do not betray yourself. How should he? she is Polly Mason, the orphan cousin of a poor scene-painter, and, for the resemblance, he will not see it as you do. You do not," he half gasped, as he asked the question, "you will not take her away, my lady?"

"Take her away!" repeated Lady Charteris; "never, my friend—my good, kind, faithful friend! Do you love her?—tell me—is she indeed dear to you? Would it grieve you to give her up?"

"My lady, nothing on earth could grieve me so deeply. I don't know how a father may feel for an only child, but I know no father in this world could love a daughter more than I love Polly."

"And your sister—she loves her too?"

"She is the torment and the idol of my sister's life. Every one loves the Duchess."

She put her hands over her face. Tears were falling—the happiest Lady Charteris had ever shed. When she looked up she was ineffably calm in the dusk.

"I have been praying for my darling," she whispered. "Oh, Heaven, keep her—Heaven protect her—pure from the world—safe from her enemies!"

"Her enemies—she has none."

"She has a terrible enemy while Sir Vane Charteris lives. Save her from him. Look, Mr. Mason! I was an heiress—it was for my fortune my uncle persecuted me. Sir Vane married me. That fortune was so left me that it falls to my eldest child at my death. He idolizes his daughter—it is his ambition that she shall make a lofty marriage—he has become almost a miser that she may be a great heiress. And Paulina is my eldest child—to Paulina it shall all go at my death—if they cannot prove my first marriage illegal and she illegitimate. I speak calmly of these things, my friend; I have thought of them so often. Paulina will inherit in spite of him—the marriage was legal, I know. I have consulted lawyers on the subject. One hair of her head is dearer to me than a dozen Maunds—it may be wrong, I cannot help it. At my death Paulina will come into an income of nine thousand a year—his daughter will not inherit a shilling. It is well he has sufficient for her. He is a bad, bold, unscrupulous man, who spares neither man nor woman in his wrath."

"I tell you this because you know how he married me, while I loathed him, and told him I loathed him. A man who would stoop to such a marriage would stoop to anything. Would Paulina be safe, think you, then, in his power? We remain here only a week or two. Keep her away from this place during that time. He suspects me now; since our return to England he has watched me as a cat watches a mouse. I don't know what he suspects, what he fears; but it is so. Even now I may be missed—he may be searching for me. Mr. Mason, I think I am the most wretched woman the wide earth holds—I think my heart broke sixteen years ago when they told me my darling was dead. The only creature in this world whom I love is yonder, and I dare not speak one word to her, dare not give her one kiss for her father's sake."

She covered her face again, and broke out into sobbing—wild, hysterical, but suppressed sobbing. Alas! long years of pain, of surveillance, had taught her that even grief was a luxury she must not indulge in.

Duke had nothing to say; a woman crying made him hot and cold by turns. He wasn't much used to it. Rosanna was superior to crying as to any other weakness of her wretched sex, and for Polly's tears, though they made him exquisitely miserable at the time, they were speedily dried. They were generally

tears of rage indeed, not of sorrow, and as she scolded vehemently all the while she wept it was not in the nature of things her tempests could last long—their very violence used them up. But this was something different, this was sorrow of which the man knew nothing, and he shrank away, with a strong desire to take to his heels and escape. Some intuition told her it pained him. She dropped her hands, and smiled through her tears.

"I have no right to distress you," she said, sweetly. "You who are my best—my only friend—the only friend, at least, whom I can trust with the secret of my life. Tell me of my child; is she truthful, is she generous, is she noble-hearted, is she amiable, is she, in a word, like her father?"

Amiable? Well, Duke wasn't prepared to say that Polly was on all occasions. She had a tongue and a temper beyond a doubt, she had a will of her own too, and made most people mind her. But—and Duke Mason's face lit up, and his eyes glowed, and great love made him eloquent, and he pictured Polly, to Polly's mother, as he saw her—the bravest, the handsomest, the most generous, and loving little girl in Great Britain.

"Thank Heaven!" the mother said. "Thank Heaven! And thank you, who have been her father and friend for so many years. Keep her still—keep her until I die and she comes into her fortune. She will be able to reward you then."

"I hope that day is very far off. I don't want any reward for keeping the Duchess. Life without her would not be worth the having."

"Teach her what you can—I cannot even give you a paltry hundred or two for that. I have not a sovereign without the knowledge of Sir Vane Charteris—not a trinket that he would not miss. I am poorer than she is, Mr. Mason."

"Oh, Polly isn't poor," cried Duke, forgetting himself for the third time, "thanks to Hawksley's generosity, she has seven hundred pounds in the Speck-haven Bank."

"Who is this Mr. Hawksley," asked Lady Charteris, with renewed suspicion; "who knows Paulina's name, and gives her seven hundred pounds? What does it mean?"

"What a dolt—a dunderhead, I am!" thought Duke, ready to bite his own tongue off. "I've got myself into a pretty mess now! My lady," he said, aloud, "Mr. Hawksley is only a very generous and eccentric young man, who took a fancy to Polly's pretty face when a baby, and sends her a Christmas present of fifty pounds from the California gold diggings every year."

She had not the faintest suspicion of the truth, and this very laud explanation satisfied her.

"He is very kind," she said; "take the money then, and educate the child as befits her birth, and the station she will one day fill. And now—she laid her hand upon his arm, and drew nearer to him—"a last favour, a strange request," she added, as she felt how Duke must be wondering; "but I dare not venture to go in daytime. He would suspect something. He is always suspecting. And at night I fear to go alone. Not the cavalier's ghost," with a faint smile, "but the people I might meet at that hour. Will you be my escort to the Grange to-morrow night?"

"Certainly, Lady Charteris," he replied. "I go at night because when all have retired I am free, only then, and I go for something I left behind me in my flight fourteen years ago—ah, you remember that night? My husband's miniature—my lost husband's—Sir Vane Charteris is only that in name—some letters—trinkets—the few presents he ever gave me. They are dearer to me than anything in the world, except his child. I had them ready, and forgot them somehow that night in my haste. They may have been removed, but I think not; I left them in the secret drawer of an Indian cabinet, and I know none of the large furniture was ever taken from the Grange. At twelve to-morrow night I will be at the Priory gates; will you meet me there?"

"I will."

She took his hand, and kissed it, as she had done that night long ago in the waiting-room at the railway.

"Heaven bless you, best of friends. Now I must leave you; he has missed me long ere this."

She flitted away with the words, and he was left alone under the red lamps.

He looked at his watch—nine o'clock—the first act would be over; but better late than never. The first violinist strode away at a tremendous rate towards the theatre.

Precisely at midnight the following night Duke, in a light waggon, was waiting outside the ponderous gates of the Priory.

Were his nocturnal adventures never to end, Duke wondered, and what would Rosanna say to-morrow when she found his bed had been unoccupied?

Lady Charteris was punctual, and he drove her

along through the quiet night to the Haunted Grange.

"You had better wait outside," the lady said, "and keep watch. I know how to effect an entrance, and I am not in the least afraid."

She approached the house with a rapid and resolute step. She might be afraid of Sir Vane Charteris, she certainly was not of supernatural visitants. The open window caught her eye, she clambered up the ivy-rope ladder and entered. The moon chanced to be obscured, and the figure asleep in the chair escaped her eye. She carried with her a dark lantern, which she lit now, and passed out of the apartment and upstairs to the chamber that had long ago been her own.

She was right in her surmise. The Indian cabinet had not been removed. She found the spring she wanted, the drawer flew out; there lay the cherished packet. She caught it up, thrust it into her bosom, and rapidly descended.

It was then her footsteps awoke the sleeper. She opened the door. Polly was standing erect, and very wide awake now.

Lady Charteris paused on the threshold with a low, startled cry.

There, in the house in which she had been born sixteen years ago this very month, child and mother stood face to face!

(To be continued.)

## THE GIPSY'S ORDEAL.

### CHAPTER IV.

THE great national sport of Spain is "bull fighting."

The Grand Arena de Toros at Madrid was an immense amphitheatre, and held eight thousand persons.

On this occasion the royal household were present, for a "grand entertainment" had been heralded for days previously.

At the signal of the trumpeters the doors at the side of the pit were opened and two mounted men entered, gaily attired in flaunting colours. These were the toreros. One man on foot accompanied these two horsemen, and he carried a pointed sword; the other two bore spears.

Then entered five or six more men, with red cloths, and on foot, who were also attired in gaily coloured costumes, which were offensive to the bull.

All promptly turned and saluted the boxes where royalty comfortably sat, then, amid the yells of the great multitude, in came the bull who was to be goaded, pricked, hunted, maddened, and slain at last for the amusement of the lordly men and gentle ladies who occupied all those ranges and tiers of seats.

The men on the horses raced after the bull and lanced him right and left, while the seven or eight men on foot shook the scarlet cloths in his face, and pricked his flanks, and others jabbed the beast in the shoulders and sides.

Then came more red cloths and more jabs, and more spear pricks, until the beast got worked up into a furious rage, when the real "sport" of this exhibition commenced.

The mob hooted and screamed; the bull rushed first at one tormentor with the scarlet cloths, then another; but each in turn dodged him, for all were agile and experienced; and instantly he caught another stab, then a sharper one; and away he flew at the matadors on foot or mounted, goring horse or man if he could succeed in catching them off guard, but he didn't.

He drove furiously in another direction. The red cloth met him; he dodged aside; he got a fresh stab for his pains, and his assailant was nowhere.

More out, more dodging, then he had his enemy! No, he missed him, and drove his stout, straight horns into the high plank fence that surrounded the ring, as his foe glided aside and escaped, and he caught another stab! One, two, three—five!

He was mad! He frothed at the mouth, bellowed, stopped, flew after the foe, who were constantly on the alert—all around his head, front and flank—continually flaunting the hated red cloth, and keeping up the everlasting worry of jabbing, lancing, and stabbing, till he was frenzied with the teasing wounds, and dripping with blood, and foam, and perspiration.

At length, infuriated and frantic, the beast plunged right and left, and, with tail erect, dashed at horse or man, hither and thither, keeping constantly in motion—raving, tearing, foaming, and dashing about, and occasionally striking down a man; or goring a horse's flank, but still getting the worst of it from his many-armed tormentors, and only prolonging the fight, and delaying briefly the end which is sure to come—to which the poor brute is foredoomed.

The throng were now excited to the highest pitch, and the vociferous yells, and bravos and vivas that rent the air were deafening, and were given with a



vim which none but these wild Spanish folk, at a bull-bait, are able to utter.

"Bravo! Encore!" yelled the people as the poor badgered bull showed better fight.

The blood streamed from his flanks; his nostrils dilated fearfully; his bellow was awful, his action splendid. But he could not punish his enemies, who continually goaded, and stabbed, and vexed him from every direction, and in all manner of tormenting ways, and constantly evaded his attempts to return their compliments.

Vain were old Tanor's efforts to resent these wrongs. The foe who surrounded him had been brought up to it, and had fought his race all their lives. They were too quick, too expert, too smart, too agile to be caught napping in that arena!

But this poor wretch has had enough of this. He is tamed, comparatively. He finds the tide is against him. He sulks, and the finisher is now called in—the matador—who gives the final blow to this abused and bleeding, but still frenzied beast!

This man, last summoned and fresh, has the most delicate and difficult duty of all. But he is trained to it. He seeks the one fatal spot, which, struck with certain aim, falls the bull as surely as if the stroke were one of lightning, instead of from the sword this matador carries.

The bull is at his maddest. He has been badgered to the last tension of endurance. His foes have fired and torn his flesh till he can bear the fright and pangs and abuse no longer—when he suddenly looks about him, and his enemies have gone! He is alone—monarch of the arena! He has beaten them all and they have fled!

No! not all. Yet all but one. He will quickly finish this gay fellow in tight and gaudy colours, who has undoubtedly been one of the murderous fiends that have been tormenting him for half an hour or more so ruthlessly; and he makes for this one lone man with a frightful rush!

Take care, my gaily dressed champion—now. Look to your duty. Strike home the first time or your chance is up!

The matador watches the rising beast—looks in his eye—marks well his distance—and as the bull reaches him, his sword point gleams, it falls, and is buried to the hilt in the jaded bull's spine—if he hits him right.

But he doesn't! This one misses the fatal stroke by just a hair's breadth, and only wounds the brute; who catches and murls him, bruised and bleeding, to the earth—when a dozen fresh foes burst in, and the bull is butchered, amid the fiendish yells and hoots and screams of the crazy multitude!

"Encore! More, more! Bravo!" yell the mob; and now the scene is a rare pandemonium.

In comes another bull, but he will not fight. And in come the butchers—slay him and drag him out with lassos, as the first has been already dragged out at the horses' heels.

Then comes a third. He shows more pluck, but is slaughtered because he gives out so soon. They drag him out and bring another; and so for seven or eight or ten.

The last one and the fiercest now plunges into the arena—where he is received with riotous shouts, and with head and tail erect he madly dashes at the outset upon the matadores.

There were fresh matadores here now, and among them is one the crowd have not seen before. He is a boy in years, but he is a man almost in muscle and stature, as his movements were swift as lightning.

He is foremost in this fight!

It is Carlos!

Inez is near by to watch his movements and his progress.

The audience observed his skill—his coolness, bravery, precision—and screams of applause burst forth as he flits about, and away, now piercing the monster's flank, now flaunting the scarlet cloth in his face, now badgering and braving, and teasing the foe to madness—as the beast rushes at and after him, but never touches or reaches him.

Down goes one of the horses, gored to his death.

"Drag him out!"

In with another.

The boy mounts the fresh one, and with spear in hand drives the bull back and forth, and leaps past him, and lunges again and again, the audience yelling, the bull roaring, the matadors on foot flying before and around him, while at every turn the boy, upon his spirited steed, drives the shaft into the monster's flank.

Then came the barbs again, and the bellowing of the enraged brute; and at last the trumpets flourish. The horses are withdrawn.

Half a dozen men on foot keep up the furious worry, and on a sudden the enemy disappears, through alps in the fence left open for the purpose, and the beast is alone—master of the field—almost.

There is one hateful foe left behind, and only one. It is the boy Carlos. He is there with a bright,

thin, keen-pointed sword, and the raving beast is quick to note this gaily dressed single enemy, and quickly makes for him. But Carlos has been there before. The throng are breathless. Not a sound! Everybody is wondering why this boy is left with that huge monster alone at the death. But he is ready. He knows his business—he knows the cost of failure. And the gleaming dark eyes of lovely Inez are upon him.

The bull rushed madly across the arena—lowered his huge frontlet to toss the lad into the air—and when he had reached to within a foot of his feet the ready sword-point went forth in a flash upon the fatal spot, and into the furious bull's spine—clear up to the hilt.

The bull fell dead in his track, as if a thunderbolt had struck him down, as Carlos manly jumped aside, and bowed to the riotous clanging of applause that burst forth from the lungs of those assembled thousands, who witnessed this daring and splendidly accomplished triumph.

This was the end for that day. Ten minutes afterwards the boy gladiator was at the side of beautiful Inez, who pronounced it "splendid," to his great gratification.

She went down with him to Barcelona, for her services would not be required for a few days with her own company, and, seeing him and Victor off, returned again to Madrid.

#### CHAPTER XVI.

AND NOW we are taken back again to the island, where this boy was in the midst of a quandary at the events that had been crowded upon his notice in the past few days.

We left him with the lady's belt, which he was examining the contents of, after he had read and re-read the writing in the tablets he had found in the skeleton's hand.

He went back to the cave, taking with him one of the axes, the telescope, the stool, the tablets, the belt, and two of the swords. The dog Victor trotted along by him quietly, and they reached home at dusk.

The she-goat got to be very docile shortly, and the young kids very soon became used to seeing both Carlos and Victor.

On the following morning Carlos carefully examined his treasure.

He found in the belt which he had taken from under the pillow of the skeleton discovered in the cabin over three hundred Spanish doubloons in gold.

These were heavy, and must have been burdensome to the wearer; but this was the way that money and valuables were then carried about.

The value of this gold was over five thousand Spanish dollars in silver. But the jewels he discovered there also were superb, and such as only ladies of the first rank in Spain could afford to own. These were set in flexible chain-work principally, and for convenience were stitched into the material of the belt, flat-wise.

There were two complete sets of diamonds and emeralds, and one smaller set of diamonds and rubies—the value of which, in any European centre, could not be, in the aggregate, less than eighteen thousand dollars more in gold.

There were in the sets two necklaces, two massive bracelets, three brooches, and ear-drops to match, and one armband. The gems were not large, but were numerous and of the first water.

Here was a fortune for the boy at once! It was his beyond question too, for in the belt he also found the following writing, by the same hand that had penned the contents of the tablets, only that it was more clearly and distinctly written, and at a previous date, as follows:

"TO WHOM IT MAY COME,—Vicissitude may overtake me on the journey I am now prosecuting, and I feel it my duty to provide for a contingency which may arise hereafter while I am able to do so consciously.

"My name is Una Perillo. I am the daughter and only heir of Don Sebastian Perillo, of Tortosa, on the coast of Spain. I have left my father's house in search of my child, of whom I was some years ago robbed. I was married secretly to Pietro Ilphonso in Spain, near Morn, by the Italian priest Finjea, of the order of St. Peter.

"A year afterwards I gave birth to my son, who was educated under the superintendence of this priest Finjea, and cared for by him at my charge until he was near ten years old, when the boy was said to have been stolen, and I have been unable to find him since. I am now upon the child's track, by advice of Finjea, who informs me that the boy is at Constantinople, whither I go to meet him.

"If successful, this document, now written in my own proper hand, will never be exposed; but should anything adverse occur to me I will deposit this declaration, with my money and jewels, in the belt worn about my own person, which will be found should I die before my return to Spain.

"If such event occur I hereby declare it my last

will and desire that my son may be sought for, and, if found, that the money and jewels that may be left with this paper may be delivered to him—minus such expenses as may be incurred in the said search for him—as the last legacy of his mother. His name is Carlos.

"If this should ever fall beneath the eye of my own father, who will recognise this handwriting, I pray his forgiveness; and I ask him, if my said child Carlos shall ever need his aid, that he will, for my sake, his daughter Una, forget the mother's error, and protect his unfortunate daughter's only child.

"To my husband, Pietro Ilphonso, I leave my blessing—to my son what may be found herewith, should this document ever see the light. I deposit this in my belt, while en voyage to Constantinople from Tortosa, in the brig 'Malero'—in view of possible accident or disaster—twenty days out from Tortosa. And I sign this with my own proper maiden and marriage name,

"UNA PERILLO ILPHONSO."

This explained everything that Carlos desired to know of his own paternity and maternity. He did not believe in Finjea, however, whom he thought was a scoundrel from the start, and no priest.

Still all this was very satisfactory, though he was too young to appreciate it fully. He really did not value a name ranch. He had not been so situated thus far in life, nor had his education been such that he had acquired any clear ideas of the value of personal reputation.

He had "roughed it" all his days, so far; and he expected to do so for the present. But the legacy he had become possessed of was valuable—or it would be if he were not upon a desolate island, with very slight prospect of getting off it, as things now looked to him.

If he remained in his present position the legacy was not worth to him so much as would have been a box or two of hard bread, of which his supply had now got so low.

Carlos took the beautiful baubles and laid them aside in a safe place with a sigh. They were of no use to him now—nor the gold either; but, at a future day, it might be all very well to have it by him.

Now his duty to the dead—whose intentions towards him were so considerate and kindly, and he remembered them with grateful sensations—called upon him to inter the remains in due form.

He called to mind the tender attentions the Donna Una had accorded him in his younger years, when she used to call to see him; and now he understood why she then seemed so affectionate in her brief intercourse with her own child!

On the day following Carlos prepared a grave in the edge of a small wood near the foot of the island—and, arranging a rude coffin, which he made from the planks of the cabin berths, he removed the lady's remains and buried them close by the spot where the wreck occurred; and, subsequently taking from the old hull the remainder of the articles he had first gathered together on the deck, he left for a time the ruins of the "Malero" to the winds and waves.

The boy recovered his spirits after a few days, and went about his work again as usual, storing in his memory the striking events that had recently occurred to him, and looking forward hopefully, notwithstanding all the past.

After taking a fresh quantity of fish, some of which he dried and others he salted—having one day found some crude salt in the hollows of the rocks—he commenced to explore the island in a systematic way.

Upon the north side he discovered one day a group of birds or fowls—which from their actions when he first saw them he supposed were a kind of grouse and partridge, but he subsequently found they were the common domestic Spanish fowl—though they were now in a wild state. They had been breeding upon the island for three or four seasons, ever since, in fact, the wreck of the "Malero," from the deck-coops of which, when that vessel came ashore, they had somehow got released.

This discovery was a great thing for Carlos, for, if he could contrive to entrap some of them, he thought they could be domesticated about his cave with much less trouble than could the goats.

And a few fowls round the spot where he made it his home would be very pleasant, to say nothing of the eggs he might obtain.

But those he saw were very shy and very wild, and it was some time before he was able to capture any of them. He saw a good many, first and last, but at a distance. Finally he adopted an expedient which proved a success.

He brought the planks of the old cook-house together after a deal of labour and several journeys to and fro, within the edge of a thick piece of woods, where, in passing from one side of the island to the other, he had several times seen and heard the fowls and chickens about.

And here he improvised a large open box-trap,



[DONNA UNA'S GRAVE.]

which he arranged with but one entrance to it, then covered it all over with boughs and brush, arbour fashion.

He then brought a few hard biscuits, which he broke up fine and scattered outside, and leading into this cage by the trap-entrance.

Once in the bird couldn't get out without aid. In two days he had a fine young rooster and four pullets in his trap—all of which he secured and arranged a coop for near his cave—making a comfortable large cage for them out of Victor's kennel and establishing them near the door of his lodging-place at once, where he could see and feed them readily, as well as accustom them to his presence.

Although these fowls were very wild at first they soon got quiet and hungry.

Carlos gathered mussels and clams and scollops at the shore, which he broke up, and they ate them greedily. Then he obtained quantities of small berries which grew upon the shrubs in the interior of the island—which he supposed would be palatable to them, as it proved—though he did not fancy the taste of this wild berry himself. Then he pulled fresh grass for them, fed them with cold, boiled fish, which they liked, and, a week after he had caged them, to his great glee he saw, in a remote corner of the coop, half a dozen fresh-laid eggs.

He boiled these, and the pullets kept on laying; and he trapped two more roosters, and a dozen more hens and chickens, all of which he put together, and had quite a family of them in all. But they were too crowded in the coop.

He then proceeded to make a stockade or corral, on a small scale, for the better convenience of his poultry, which were now giving him eight or ten eggs a day—in addition to which he would soon have some young chickens, with good management, he thought.

So he went to the woods, not far distant, and cut plenty of stakes, which he sharpened with one of his axes and drove down a foot in the soft ground on the south side of his cave, placing the sticks about three or four inches apart on one side, then, setting small cedar trees, with the rough foliage on, in close compact order, side by side for the other lines, he made a large, nice enclosure for his original birds.

This he covered partly with the old sail, and partly with flat boughs and cedar branches, so that they could not fly out; and here he kept and fed and reared his poultry for a long time.

Carlos used daily the old telescope he had found on the wreck.

Every morning and evening he went up on the high ground in the rear of his cave and scanned the horizon all about in search of any stray sail that

might be passing, through which means he might be rescued from his solitude.

But he had never yet seen any vessel or living object beyond the borders of the island.

He had often thought of the brigantine's boat, which still lay where he had secured it, and he determined he would rig it up and provision it, and put away in search of land somewhere. But the perils of such a voyage, alone as he was, were too great to be encountered without due consideration, and, to his mind, then only as a last resource.

Meanwhile Carlos's goats were doing nicely. The kids were growing finely, and had come to be very gentle, and quite domesticated. The mother had weaned them, and Carlos got a good supply of fresh milk from the old one now daily.

The two kids were male and female. They remained near the cave, where the old one was still kept tethered, and at last all got used to the dog's presence, and enjoyed each other's companionship, to the great satisfaction of the boy, who was constantly by them.

The hens laid out their litters and stole away into corners to brood.

Carlos arranged additional smaller cages around outside the large corral, into which upon the dry sand he placed nests of eggs which had accumulated on his hands.

One morning a nice brood of chicks made their appearance, then another; and before the close of the season the boy had three or four scores of chickens coming up and running about outside at their leisure around the cave, the mothers only being confined in the smaller cages.

The chickens soon learned to pick up their own living among the insects, worms, beach-flies, and snails in the brush and along the shore and narrow beach in front.

These new broods after a time became quite domestic in their habits.

The old birds were killed off and eaten, as were also the young male chickens mostly from time to time.

At the end of a few months Carlos had quite a family of live stock around him.

The kids bred after a time, and the old goat had another pair of twin-kids late in the year.

Carlos had not neglected to think of the coming winter or cold season that he felt approaching, though the weather was never very severe in that climate; still, vegetation dried up, and the nights came to be much cooler.

The boy gathered a great quantity of the beach-plums, which he dried and stored in his cave. He also caught a good many fish from off the rocks, which he hung up and dried or salted. He obtained a goodly quantity of grapes too, which in one part

of the island grew very plentifully. These he hung upon branches and dried into very good raisins.

His bread was quite gone, but the bulk of the contents of the keg of spirits was still left.

The tools he had found on the wreck were invaluable to him—the axes, the tin kettles, swords, files, hammer and saw; and the instruments, quadrant, and telescope also—and he made good use of them all.

And thus for twelve or more months from the time of the foundering of the brigantine the lone boy contrived to exist upon that desolate island in the sea, surrounding himself by degrees with his creature comforts, such as they were, and in the society of his favourite dog, his goats, and his chickens, which finally afforded him good food, milk, and occasionally meat, with plenty of eggs, and with the fruit and fish, of which he found an abundance, all contributed to render him in a measure contented.

But Carlos often looked at the boat. He turned it over upon its side and found it in good condition. He could readily repair it and fit it for sea. He thought of Inez. Where was she? Did she still remember him? He had not seen her for fifteen long, weary months. Would he ever meet her again? Was she happy? He hoped so. Little, however, did he suspect the condition she was really in.

Carlos was now in his eighteenth year, well filled out in form. His beard had grown considerably, and his hair was thick, and long, and black as a coal. He was deeply embrowned by exposure to the sun and sea air. But he was in fine health and never really despaired of his future.

The voyage he had for months contemplated was a dangerous one, but no friendly sail came to his relief, and at last he tired of life on that lone island. So he examined the boat again, looked abroad on the sea, then upon Victor. And he thought of Inez again. How glad he would be to see her once more.

Then he remembered the fortune he possessed in gold and jewels could he but reach the land safely, with it, but which was worthless to him there, in any event.

And finally, after remaining upon the island for a full year and a half, he determined one morning to rig the boat and provision it, and with his fortune and his faithful dog, to put the prow of the tiny boat away towards the north at a venture, in the hope of finding land, and home, and Inez eventually.

Amid all his labours during his detention upon the island the boy had carefully observed the changes of the weather from month to month.

It was now the dry season, and southerly winds prevailed, he noted, at this period. This was propitious, and he went cheerfully to work to prepare the boat.

(To be continued.)





[WAITING FOR THE VERDICT.]

# THE SNAPT LINK.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Sybil's Inheritance," "Evelyn's Plot," &c., &c.

## CHAPTER XXXIX.

Hence—away, vindictive thought,  
Thy pictures are of pain,  
The visions through thy dark eye caught  
They with no gentle chains are fraught.

GERTRUDE MUGRAVE rose from her brief, restless slumber with the heavy weight of approaching evil on her heart. It was nothing new for the long-trying orphan to live under that perpetual sword of Damocles which was but imaged in the ancient story.

She knew full well that her liberty and life were in daily jeopardy, and that the word which would assert her innocence must never be spoken by her—even at risk of life itself.

But the presence of that dreaded, selfish man had brought back with frightful vividness the whole events of that tragic night.

Again she had lived it over in her dreams; and her waking had been scarcely less wretched than on the strange wedding morn that had seen fair Hilda as the bride of death, and those nearest to her in kin accused of the blood-stain she had left behind.

"I must see you!" floated before her eyes in fiery characters as she recalled the brief slip of paper which she had crushed like a venomous insect in her hands, and like that insect had left its sting behind.

It must be done—that much she knew without farther doubt or parley with herself.

But the result—what of that? She had promised Lord Marston that, if possible to comply after that dreaded interview, she would submit to his wishes.

"Jesuit that I was!" she exclaimed, impatiently. "Yet Heaven knows it is foreign to my nature to practise deceit and subterfuge! Ah, me—ah, me! when shall I be at rest from this weary struggle?"

Not yet, poor Gertrude! Your time for rest must be won by yet more fiery trials, more heroic exertions.

She completed her toilet with a kind of mocking care, for which she could scarcely have accounted to herself.

Every detail was carefully studied to its scrupulous neatness and simple elegance, and her graceful form and delicate features were well adorned by the soft gray with its subduing black, her faultless coiffure, and the rich chain and cross that were her sole ornament.

She knew that her interview with Aubrey Lestrangle was at hand, and the excitement brought a brilliant glitter to her soft eyes, that gave fresh beauty and animation to her usually quiet features as she entered the breakfast-room where she expected her unwelcome guest.

"You have come most opportunely, Gertrude," exclaimed Aubrey, advancing eagerly from the recess of the deep bay window. "I suppose it will be some time before my uncle appears, and we are not likely to be interrupted."

"There will be ample time for all we can need to say," she replied, coldly. "There is little in common between us."

"You are wrong, Gertrude. We have common interests, and a common foe," he said, striving to preserve a calmness he did not feel. "It is for us to unite our fates, as well for defence as for happiness."

"Never!" she said, "never! That is impossible!"

"Hush, Gertrude! You speak simple nonsense," he said, impatiently. "Listen to the case as it stands, and you will see there is no alternative. You are a proscribed fugitive, under suspicion of the foulest crime. There is a queen's ransom offered for the discovery of the true criminal. And Rupert de Vere is urged on by every motive of love, and revenge, and interest, to discover you and prove you guilty."

"I know it, but Heaven may still avert the danger and the crime," she murmured, rather to herself than her companion.

"You speak riddles now, I must confess," he resumed, bitterly. "I do not suppose any one would consider it a crime to bring the guilty to justice. And, of course, in his case all combines to quicken his zeal. He will vindicate his own innocence, secure a large fortune, and gratify his revenge and hate."

She shivered as if an ague blast had seized her frame.

"No, no! He would not be so cruel. It is not in his nature," she said, faintly.

"I tell you he is even now on your track, like a bloodhound eager for prey and reward. Gertrude, you have but one hope of safety. The protection of a husband, who has rank, and wealth, and love to bestow upon you! Be advised."

"Love!" she repeated, bitterly. "Mr. Lestrangle, do not profane a name you cannot even comprehend. I have but one answer to such a monstrous proposal!"

"Monstrous!" he repeated, stung by her scorn, and fascinated strangely by her expressive beauty and proud yet feminine mien.

"Yes," she said. "What else can it be called? The bereaved betrothed of the murdered Hilda is anxious in a few brief months to wed the accused cousin of the dead, who is scarcely yet mouldering in her early tomb. It is murdering her afresh to dream of such insult to the departed. It would raise her spirit to haunt you and me till our own last hour comes. And for filthy, wretched gold you would do this!"

"No, no!" he said, paling like a corpse at her words, but struggling hard for composure. "This is exaggerated and false sentiment, Gertrude. If it were for such a mean cause, I could gain abundant wealth by assisting to denounce you, but I cannot—I cannot!" he repeated, shuddering. "Gertrude, you say it cannot be love that draws me to you! I tell you from my very heart that I do feel a strange fascination towards you—different from but more powerful than that which drew me to Hilda. That was simple admiration of her beauty and grace, and she was a fitting bride for me in all respects. But with you it is different. I experience a new and powerful attraction. I risk much, if I gain much in wedding you, yet again I urge my suit. I implore you to end this wretched suspense and become mine, my safe and sheltered bride. I have much, far more than most, to offer. I have a home, wealth—name to give now, a coronet hereafter; and oblivion of the wretched past—a wiping out, as it were, of the stain that lies on your fame and your innocence. It seems to me that it is for you to plead, not for me, when such powerful inducements offer."

A strange expression flitted over her face. "Aubrey Lestrangle," she said, "tell me, before your Maker—if you dare—what is your inmost belief in this matter? Who do you think was the murderer of poor Hilda?—and for what motive?"

He walked hastily up and down the room, as if in hurried and powerful agitation, ere he replied.

Even Gertrude could scarcely doubt his emotion, as she gazed at his working features and the uncontrollable convulsion of his hands as they clenched the fingers in his inward struggle.

At length he returned to the spot where she stood leaning against the heavy curtains that threw out in strong relief her pale, delicate features, and his voice was constrained and harsh as he replied:

"There is little question as to the probable culprits. It lies in a narrow compass. Who can judge between them?"

"You mean it is either Rupert de Vere or myself," she replied, her large eyes fixed on his face with the air rather of a judge than an accused criminal.

"Certainly," he said, with a sudden recovery of

composure. "There can be no doubt of it. No one else could have had any motive for the deed."

"If I were sheltered from danger—what then? Would the suspicion and the danger be turned on my fellow criminal?" she asked, bitterly.

"Perhaps—unless the affair fell into abeyance, which with the large reward on the balance would not be very probable," he replied, with an air of relief.

"Thank you. It is enough," she said, scornfully. "From your own mouth I have the admission that you are willing either to marry a woman whom you do not absolutely acquit of a heinous crime, and turn the risk and the shame on another, whom you do not absolutely declare guilty. Aubrey Lestrange, were you a duke, instead of the heir to this title and estates, which you will disgrace far more than they can do you honour, my answer would be the same. I would welcome prison, disgrace, death itself, rather than be the wife of one I despise and suspect."

"Suspect," he uttered, falteringly. "I do not understand you. Of what do you suspect me, Gertrude?"

"Of base selfishness and wrong, that might lead to any crime," she said, quietly. "But, let that pass, Mr. Lestrange; it is for one who sees all, and governs all, to condemn or to acquit. For myself, I neither confess nor deny the guilt resting on me, nor do I resent Mr. De Vere's harsh hatred. You understand this much, you will not dare to malign or persecute him for those wretched estates," she added, impatiently.

"I tell you once more what I will do, mad, foolish, headstrong girl," he said, hoarsely. "I will spare no money, no pains, pause at no measures, however hard, to punish your guilt. You have had as much open to you. Even now it is not too late. I warn you that you shall receive no mercy unless you retract your decision. There are but two alternatives before you—happiness, wealth, rank, and safety, and a prison, and a grave with a dishonoured name. No, Gertrude Murgave, make your election. You will not have another chance of escape. I give you this one warning—no tears or prayers or appeals will avail you if you are mad enough to refuse this offer. I have pleaded with you as an humble suitor, though I have all to give and nothing to receive, and in my turn I shall know how to scorn and abandon you in the peril that awaits you."

Gertrude was very white, but the light did not fade from her eyes as she listened, and Aubrey was perhaps more exasperated as he won on by the conviction that her firmness was unshaken, though her fears must be appalling to a fragile, tender woman.

"Have you considered?" he repeated, harshly, his eyes glaring on her, with lightning, tiger-like ferocity.

"There is no necessity to consider. It is impossible," she said, in a low tone that yet had no trembling in it.

"Do you understand—are you aware of the consequences?" he repeated. "You will have no friends—none. Surrounded by foes, hated by the public, who will pour execrations on so disgraced a name, you will turn for succour and help in vain in your extremity."

"I can but die," she said, sadly. "No one will miss or mourn the lonely orphan."

"Then do not blame aught but your own mad infatuation for your fate," he thundered, angrily. "I have done all that man can to save you. Your blood be on your own head, foolhardy, obstinate girl."

She drew her slight figure proudly up.

"Aubrey Lestrange," she said, calmly, "I know you now as you really are. I have often doubted you, even in the past days, when you displayed but your brilliant seeming to my poor, anxious gaze. Perhaps Hilda is happier in her early grave than she would have been as your wife—base, and selfish, and mean as you are."

"I suppose that influenced your actions then," retorted Aubrey, stung to the very quick by the proud contempt with which she met his denunciations. "Well, it was a remarkable way of breaking off the marriage," he added, unthinkingly, shifting his position so as to escape her intense, withering look of scorn.

"Aubrey Lestrange, beware," she said, loftily. "The taunts you hurl may recoil with tenfold force on your own head. Heaven overrules all in its struggle and all-wise providence, and it will in its own time reveal the object for which it permitted the snapping of that well-nigh riveted link."

Had a bomb shell fallen on the castle the effect could scarcely have been more remarkable than was produced by those few simple words.

Aubrey bounded as it were from his resting-place to Gertrude's side, and grasped her arm with convulsive and, as she could instinctively perceive, with half-unconscious violence.

"Girl, girl, what do you mean? how dare you?" he said, hoarsely. "Are you not mad to risk such words, to allude to such—"

Then he stopped abruptly, as if recalling the full sense of this confession of terror and weakness.

"I appeal to Heaven to witness the truth, and may it defend the right, and the innocent—ay, and the penitent, and the erring also," she added, with her eyes meekly lifted upwards, and her hands clasped in fervent prayer.

It was a sight that awed even Aubrey for a brief moment.

She looked so strong in her weakness, so pure, and martyr-like in her patient courage, that he felt as if he were indeed warring with an angel.

But the hand of fate was on him!

He had dared his destiny, and he must work it to the end.

"Well, I have no more to say, Gertrude Murgave," he resumed, sullenly, after a brief pause. "I shall, of course, keep your secret no longer, but inform Lord Marsden without delay of the identity of his protégée with the murderer of my betrothed. I may safely predict that he will give no countenance to such a crime, nor harbour the criminal."

She bowed her head quietly, but did not even vouchsafe a reply.

"Under the circumstances," he resumed, "it seems to me that we shall scarcely find much satisfaction in partaking together of the morning meal, though, of course, the temporary hostess of my uncle's table may desire to do the honours for the last time it may be that she will have the onerous duty."

Gertrude only betrayed her comprehension of the taunting words by walking to the bell and ringing it with perhaps rather unusual energy. "Bring breakfast; your lord will no doubt have it in his own apartment," she said, with a composed dignity that fairly astonished the young man, whose wrath was powerless, as it seemed, to shake the adamant of that strange girl's courage.

"If impotent to terrify I will be strong to punish," he muttered, sullenly, as he was fain to sit down at the well-covered table and receive his cup of Mocha and his other condiments from her hands. It was a singular meal. Not a word was exchanged save of the usual necessary courtesies for the table, and these were signified rather by bows and gestures than speech.

Yet Gertrude's hand did not tremble as she poured out the coffee, nor did the ordinary courtesies of a hostess remain unfulfilled to the very utmost precision. Each minute increased Aubrey's bitterness.

Each proof of her superiority of character only riveted the spell that she had begun to exercise over him.

So true is it that there is a natural instinct of the weak to attach themselves to the strong. But the conflict in the girl's bosom was severe and heart-rending under that veil of outward calmness, and the cup of hot, fragrant coffee that formed her sole refreshment was scarcely stimulant enough to save the deadly faintness from stealing over her and betraying all.

At length the ordeal was over, and she made the usual formal inquiry as to her guest's will, ere rising to leave that table where she might perhaps, never take her place again.

"Gertrude, in pity to yourself, one more word. Will you take time?—will you ask your heart whether it cannot ease itself greater agony than you can perhaps realize?" said Aubrey, earnestly, arresting her steps.

"It is useless, Mr. Lestrange. I once more tell you that no possible suffering could change my resolve; spare yourself farther humiliation and no greater pain," she said, with a shade less haughtiness, as she marked his softer tone. But her mien was proud and steady as she took her way to the door of the room, and, as she disappeared, Aubrey Lestrange clasped his hands in unrestrained agony.

"Oh, heaven, oh, heaven!" he exclaimed, "where will this end? Is this terrible ordeal never to cease? Hilda, Hilda!—she said well—thou art happier in thy calm sleep than are those thou hast left behind!"

#### CHAPTER XI.

See on those ruby lips the trembling breath—  
Those cheeks now fading at the blast of death;  
Cold is that breast which warmed the world before,  
And those love-darting eyes must roll no more.

Is she dead?

Such was the question put in icy tones to the surgeon summoned to Madeline Cleveland as she lay, still, senseless, and corpse-like, in the dressing-room of the theatre whither she had been conveyed after the accident.

It was Philip Dacre who spoke, and the words seemed to come mechanically and without control from his lips in his fixed, gloomy despair.

"Dead?—why, no—certainly not," said Mr. Page, decidedly, "but I confess I cannot say much more. There is terrible exhaustion of the nervous system,

and I really cannot answer for the consequences unless the injuries are less severe than I at present imagine. The first thing will be to institute a more thorough examination before I can give any opinion. Where does the poor girl live?"

Only the manager could answer that question. Madeline's residence had been kept a profound secret from all other of the employees of the theatre at her own especial request.

In fact Mr. Onslow had given a solemn pledge never to reveal the secret except by her consent. "It is at no great distance," he said, evasively; "should she be taken thither first, sir?"

"Certainly not. The wounds must be dressed, and some restorative administered, or she would not reach there alive," replied the surgeon, brusquely. "Are you any relation, sir?" he added, turning to Philip, whose right attitude and features spoke of deeper sympathy than humanity would induce.

"I knew her in the country," replied Philip; "I would wish to arrange all for her comfort."

"Ah, in some provincial theatre, of course. Yes, I understand," nodded Mr. Page, sagely. "And very praiseworthy, of course, my good sir. But I must lose no time now, if you please, sir."

Now Philip's blood boiled within him at the surgeon's extremely natural inference. How he shrank from leaving that fairy creature to be examined in the rude grasp of strangers, and dreaded, with sickening agony, the verdict that would seal his misery!

But he was not one who wore his heart on his sleeve, and he calmly retired from the room, leaving Madeline to the surgeon and her "dresser," who was too helplessly terrified to be of any essential use.

"I will wait here," he said to Mr. Onslow; "there may be something wanted. This is no case for ceremony," he added, impatiently, as he marked the manager's look of surprise and distrust.

Philip paced the narrow passage before the door with a tension of agony that would have thankfully listened to the bitterest groan that at least gave promise of life and consciousness.

But none came. There were but the unavoidable noises of the surgeon's operations, and his brief orders to his inexperienced assistant, to be distinguished, and Philip's faint remnant of hope was with each second falling into actual despair.

At length the door opened, and Mr. Page came out of the room.

"I have examined the wounds," he said, in reply to the mute appeals of his anxious auditors. "They are severe, but I scarcely think a vital part is touched, and the face and head have certainly escaped injury. But the exhaustion of the system is far more extreme than can be attributed fairly to the shock, and I am, I confess, anxious as to the effect, when the collapse passes off and reaction sets in."

"But how—whether is she to be moved?" asked Philip, still speaking as if he were a machine rather than a man.

"Well, I have come to the conclusion that the sooner she is in her own home the better; I will accompany her myself, in case of any untoward emergency if, as you say, it is not far, Mr. Onslow."

Scarcely ten minutes by a cab, but she has a strong wish for her address to remain concealed, and I am perhaps not justified in mentioning it before this gentleman," glancing at Philip.

"Man, would you deprive her of the only friend she has?" said Philip, fiercely. "There, do not lose an instant—each breath we waste may be her last."

"Well, certainly you saved her life—that I must say," was the hesitating response; "and," he added, in a lower tone, "it's not very likely she'll ever know whether her secret was betrayed or not. It's a great misfortune, and after all the expense in putting the pieces on the stage."

It was some half-hour or more when the still-insensible girl was conveyed to her humble lodgings, wrapped in the impromptu garments which had loosely replaced her fatally elegant gossamer robes.

Philip Dacre had arranged a kind of litter in the roomy vehicle he had busied himself in obtaining, and on the thick blankets, and lightly covered by a soft, cool, linen wrap, the senseless Madeline was slowly and tenderly escorted to her home.

"Better go to the hospital," had been the suggestion of several of the curious inquirers for her welfare.

But Philip had sternly rejected the proposal, and there was something in his manner that silenced all further officious advice. Perhaps he repented for a brief moment when the cab stopped at the house, where only a dim light was burning in the passage, and all the inmates retired to rest, leaving Miss Cleveland to enter with her door key.

It was some minutes before the landlady could be roused from her first sound slumber; and when she did at last appear in the unbecoming guise of a large plaid shawl and mob nightcap over a not-over-clean nightdress and thin, grizzled hair the reception was not very encouraging.



"I'm not going to have sick folks here; I've no time for running about and nursing them, that's certain," grumbled Mrs. Chandler, still holding the street-door in her hand, and appearing extremely ready to slam it in the face of the applicants for admission.

But Philip Dacre was cool enough to repress the angry retort that rose to his lips, and use other arguments more efficacious, if more galling to his own indignant passion.

"Listen a moment before you decide, my good madam. I am an old friend of this lady's, and quite prepared to pay liberally for all the trouble or loss you may sustain in her unfortunate illness. I shall procure a nurse for her to-morrow, and will allow you double rent, besides meeting any extra expense you may incur till she is well again."

"Or in her grave," trembled in his heart as he met Mr. Page's significant look, but he did not dare unnerve himself by indulging such a thought.

"Well, that's like a gentleman, I must say, and alters the case a little," was the mollified response. "Only, you see, it gives a house a bad name when there's illness or death in it. But, to be sure, she's on the second floor, and it's not infectious, so you may bring her in."

Again the light burden was raised, and carried tenderly up the stairs, lighted by the now bustling officious landlady.

"Poor thing—she is bad. It won't be long I'm thinking," she said, shaking her head as she opened the door of Madeline's apartments, and walked through the sitting-room to the inner chamber, where all was ready for her reception.

It seemed as if some presentiment had guided the unfortunate sufferer in her arrangements: she had quitted the room which might perhaps be her last earthly abode. The little preparations for the night toilet were all in simple yet refined completeness. The humble chamber was neat and clean as a princess could desire, and no delay ensued in placing the patient in her small, dimly-lighted bed.

Philip looked round the sitting-room, to which he had retired during the operation, with a sad, sickening curiosity.

What a contrast to the elegant, luxurious saloon in which he had first seen Madeline Cleveland, and accosted her with the somewhat contemptuous mission he had undertaken!

The deadened colours of the worn carpet, the one small sofa, the plain, cupboard-like cheffonier, the lodging-like accompaniments of all in Madeline's present home were scarcely more opposite to the rich Axminster, the fauteuil, and the endless knickknacks of her former abode than was Philip's opinion of their tenant.

He knew that Aubrey had besought Madeline to accept from him all that was in his power to give. He had himself offered to take her to the shelter of his arms, his home, his name, all suspected and sullied as she was. But she had refused ease, safety, love, rather than violate the honour and duty that alone remained to her, and chosen this abode of solitude and obscurity—this life of danger and toil.

All his hard thoughts had vanished at the unstrained emotion his presence had occasioned—an emotion which had cost her so dear. She was his—his in heart—if she might never gladden his rugged nature by her witching grace and fascination. The well-born, hard-souled, intellectual cynic felt a thrill of overpowering softness at the certainty of the poor outcast's love which the affection of a titled heiress would never have sent through his veins.

"What hope?" he said, slowly, to Mr. Page, as he returned from the inner room—so calmly indeed, that the surgeon was completely disarmed of any suspicion as to the feelings of his patient's "friend."

"If I were to speak according to my judgment, my good sir, I should simply answer, 'None,'" was the reply. "Indeed I scarcely think it possible that so fragile a creature can survive the shock she has received, even if the wounds do well, which I cannot predict with any certainty. Then there are the chances of fever when the reaction sets in, after this syncope. Briefly, I fear it is all but hopeless."

"Has she revived? Is she conscious?" asked Philip, in hardly stern tones, which spoke of the effort his self-mastery cost him.

"She has opened her eyes, and she breathes more freely; but entire quiet is the only remaining restorative I dare administer at present. I shall return early in the morning, and can judge perhaps better then."

Mr. Page made a decided movement to quit the room.

"A nurse—where can I obtain a trustworthy one?" asked Philip, arresting his departure.

"I think I know of one, who has been attending a rather singular patient of mine, now convalescent. She seems to have the rare faculty of holding her tongue, which very few women possess. This poor

little actress will need some one who is not too high and mighty or too inquisitive for her attendant. You see, sir, these public characters are rather in disrepute, and you'd be surprised what casts there is among these professional nurses. One refused to my knowledge an excellent case because the patient was in lodgings. I will see if Mrs. Balfour can undertake it. Good night—or rather, good morning, Mr. —"

"Dacre," supplied Philip, coldly. "I shall be obliged by your procuring this condescending woman, Mr. Page; and she will be as well paid as she can desire."

Philip remained only to enforce a few more directions on the now civil and zealous Mrs. Chandler, and, slipping a sovereign into her hand for "present expenses," he went downstairs and threw himself again into the cab that had brought poor Madeline to her wretched home.

"Aubrey—Aubrey Lesrange, you are a villain, and vengeance will find you yet!" he muttered as he sank back in a corner of the vehicle, and shut his eyes to keep out the terrible image of that tiny blaspheming form.

#### CHAPTER XL.

And if it hap a man be in disease,  
She doth her business, and her full pain,  
With all her might him to comfort and please;  
If from his disease him she might restrain.

GERTRUDE'S bravery had stood her in noble stead during her trying interview with one at once dreaded and despised.

But she had scarcely gained her room ere the tension of nerve and strength gave way, and she threw herself on her couch in a passion of despairing agony. She knew her danger so well.

There was something in the serpent-like nature of that plausible man that left her less hope than had he been of the iron temper of Philip Dacre, or the imperious, passionate disposition of Rupert de Vere. She would as soon expect to escape from a tiger's fangs, from a basilisk's eyes, as from that selfish, cruel grasp where self-interest was arrayed against her.

Already she realized the terrible ordeal which was in store for her—the deadly warrant, the grim official, the felon's cell, the criminal's dock, and—

There she paused and closed her eyes, and shrank from the appalling picture. The rest was too horrible to anticipate. What would it be in the reality?

But, if the physical courage failed, the spirit was strong as ever.

She never even dreamed of yielding, of seizing the means of escape, or the rich prize within her grasp. Better death and all it entailed than such misery as that offered to one whose heart was already given to one all unmindful, scornful of the boon; and yet who held it lastingly, irrevocably, beyond the redemption of the despised and persecuted girl whose destiny it was to suffer for his sake.

"This is intolerable! I shall go mad!" she groaned at last. "Oh, Rupert, Rupert! if you could but guess—if you were but just and indulgent, what I could endure for your sake with joy rather than patience! But now it is hard—very hard. Yet it must be borne. It would be worse were I to see him suffering, execrated, dying. Yes, poor Gertrude, you must still suffer on, strive, and die as only a woman can."

She lay for a few moments more in utter abandonment to despair.

Then she sprang from her couch with a kind of wild, feverish energy.

"This will never do. I must not indulge this passion, or I shall betray all," she murmured. "I will see what Heaven's nature will speak to me of comfort and strength."

She hastily threw on a cloak and hat, and, gliding hastily down the staircase, emerged from the house at a side door which she did not expect was even known to Aubrey, and stole by a winding path from the sight of the front windows of the castle.

Then she hastened more boldly along till she quitted altogether the house precincts, and came out on the wild, picturesque domain of lake and mountain that formed the wild landscape of that vast Denefoot estate.

She sped on without any definite destination till the sudden idea flashed across her that she would visit again the strange old man who had sheltered her on the previous day.

He had bidden her come again, he had hinted strange mysteries in his dark questionings.

Perhaps he might aid, perhaps he might give her a refuge till the immediate danger that threatened her was overpast.

It was a forlorn, wild hope, but the despairing catch at straws, and Gertrude had neither friend nor place of safety left to her in the wide, dreary world. At least she had the wretched privilege of fearing nothing if she hoped nothing in any daring emprise she might essay.

The idea was rapidly acted upon. She sprang over the uneven and difficult path with the rapid agility of a gazelle, and in a briefer space than she could have believed possible she found herself standing before Mr. Clinton's cottage.

The door was closed, and she hesitated before venturing to apply for admission which she had no right to claim.

Twice she raised her hand to knock at the primitive wooden portal, and as often dropped it again in timid powerlessness. But a remembrance of the terrible alternative at the Castle gave her courage, and she rapped till her delicate knuckles were almost skinned with the eager force of the blows before any one came to acknowledge the summons.

At length a louder, more desperate attempt brought the welcome answer of approaching footsteps, and in another moment the figure of the same old man she had so frequently met and speculated upon appeared at the open portal.

"Who is it that endangers life by such unseemly violence?" he said, harshly, just peeping from the barely opened door, while Gertrude involuntarily shrank back from his angry reception.

"I am wretched—in danger. That is my excuse," she said, at length, gathering courage from despair.

"Ha! is it you, girl? What do you want from a lone and feeble man? It seems as if I were to be set upon by all the foolhardy idiots in Westmoreland and Cumberland. Speak, child, quick! I cannot wait. There is a life at stake, I tell you."

"I want shelter. I will not trouble; I will hide myself from even your sight, if you will save me," she faltered, in agony. "Have mercy on me, for I am threatened on every side."

There was a trembling pathos in her soft voice, with a ring of sharp misery even in its sweet tones that pleaded more than words.

"Well, child, well; quick, come in! I can but turn you out when I know the truth; and perhaps you can help me for the moment," he added, in a quick aside.

"Anything, anything!" she said, springing forward like a hunted deer within the small passage.

As the door closed behind her she gave a deep sigh of relief as if it was a barrier between her and her relentless persecutors.

Poor girl! as if that thin wood, that feeble old man could shelter from the arm of justice or of revenge.

"There, there; come in, and quickly," he returned, in a somewhat subdued tone, "though, indeed, there's not much fear of his hearing a louder step or voice than yours, child, if indeed he ever should hear aught again till the day of doom."

"He—of whom are you speaking?" she asked, eagerly, though a moment afterwards she smiled at her own folly in connecting every person and event with her own tragic story.

"Oh, a foolhardy young fellow who managed to topple over the mountain ridge and come rolling down like a heavy stone, only that he had the instinct to catch at some shrubs, which saved him from instant death," was the reply. "One would think I was bewitched," he added, peevishly, "after all these years to be worried by a silly girl and a care-for-nothing youth like this in the course of twenty-four hours."

"Is he much hurt? Can you save him?" asked the girl, pityingly.

"Can I tell whether the wind will blow from East or West a week hence?" he returned, contemptuously. "I should think his skull is cracked, unless it is harder than mountain granite."

"May I see him? Perhaps I can help you. I should be thankful indeed, and I have had some experience in nursing," she asked, tremblingly, for the old man's look and tone were chillingly repelling.

"Then you will manage not to faint and give me twice the trouble, I hope," he replied, sharply. "I can tell you he's no very tempting spectacle even for my old eyes, and it's worse still I suppose for a young creature like you."

"I am old in grief and in experience," she said, shuddering. "I have seen appalling sights ere now. Let us go; you said but now that minutes were precious."

He looked fixedly at her, then turned to a small cupboard in the wall.

"Here," he said, "take this. You look as if nothing had passed those pale lips for many an hour, and it's no use starving if you mean to do any good."

He handed her a glass of wine and a morsel of cake as he spoke.

She swallowed the refreshment in silence. It might still the trembling of her limbs and warm her chill heart.

"Now I am ready," she said, firmly.

Mr. Clinton led the way up a short staircase that well nigh opened on the chamber above, so small was the landing that divided it, then "Be cautious and calm," he whispered.

Perhaps the caution was rather daunting than the reverse, but Gertrude drew one long breath and followed with a firm step and calm features into the small, darkened chamber.

She had need of her self-control.

On the small couch lay a bloodstained form, motionless, as if it were already a corpse, and not yet stripped of its torn and soiled garments, and by some instinct she drew near to the spot.

Gertrude closed her eyes and strove to nerve herself for the spectacle that awaited her.

The face was upturned as it had been laid but a brief space before on the pillow, and though there were long streaks of blood flowing from a wound in the head, and the features were distorted by slight scars and bruises that had been received in the fall, yet its identity could not have been concealed from that quick, passionate, loving gaze had a still more fearful disguise changed the natural well-loved face. It was Rupert de Vere!

Gertrude used scarcely fear him now, and had she ever cherished anger or resentment it must have vanished at that terrible sight in a far sterner heart than the poor fugitive's.

"Rupert! Rupert!" burst from her lips almost before she was aware; but the deafness that dulled the old man's hearing served her in good stead, and the words were not understood even if the sound reached his ears.

"Well, child, dare you touch him? Can you render any assistance while the young fellow lives?" he asked, sharply.

"Yes, only do not let us lose a minute," she gasped. "How can you leave him thus?" she added, almost fiercely.

"Well, it's not above a quarter of an hour since I got him home, and old Dorcas has gone for some healing nostrums," he replied, more graciously than she could perhaps have hoped. "Now let us begin. Can you help to wash him? then I will get him into bed."

She only replied by throwing off her cloak and gazing round for the means of carrying out his request.

In less time than the old man believed possible she had poured out water into a basin, and returned with sponge and towel to the bedside.

She was white as the sufferer as she began, but her fingers never trembled even when she put aside the hair from that gaping wound and staunching the life-blood that was pouring from its veins.

"Give me a bandage, he will die if it be not stopped," she said, quietly, as she went on gently removing the gory stains from the beloved face; "and brandy if you have it. Surely you must know what should be necessary in such a case," she added, reproachfully.

There had been something that appeared almost to numb the old man's faculties in the scene he witnessed. His eyes wandered from the girl to the pale sufferer, and again to her earnest, delicate features with a perplexed, questioning gaze that absorbed for the moment his whole thought and attention. But he started at her behest, and hastened with as much alacrity as his feeble limbs permitted to carry it into execution.

An old handkerchief was torn into long strips, and a portion of lint steeped in the spirit and applied by Gertrude's delicate fingers to the wound ere she bound it tightly so as to stop the effusion of blood.

Once only she experienced a deadly faintness as she saw that basin of crimson water that recalled so terribly the morning of Hilda's murder. But she turned resolutely away and once again resumed her task, till all that was possible to feminine skill was done.

"He is living," said the old man, in answer to her imploring look as she laid her hand on the cold wrist. "I will presently give him the only dose within my reach which is worth many a doctor's whole medicine chest in its power, if sufficient animation remains. But then will come the danger, and if he's going to have a mouth's inflammation and fever I should like to know who is to stand such a trial, after all these years of quiet. I've a great mind to send to the Castle and have him taken there."

Gertrude laid her hand on the old man's arm and gazed imploringly up in his face.

"In the name of the Heaven, to whose power these giant mountains give witness, where your life has so long been passed, I adjure you to fulfil the task which Providence has brought to your very door. If you would not have the guilt of his blood on your head keep this catastrophe secret till you sufferer is safe or in his grave."

(To be continued.)

#### PROVERBS.

WHEN the eyes and the lips lie, look to the hands and the feet.

THE dragon-fly told the bee a secret; the whole hive of bees knew it that evening. The dragon-fly

told another dragon-fly the secret; for three whole days it remained a secret. The dragon-fly told the lark the secret; the lark soared up to heaven and did not think much of the dragon-fly's secret—the other larks never knew it.

## A DARING GAME;

OR,

## NEVA'S THREE LOVERS.

### CHAPTER IX.

RUFUS BLACK's heart grew heavier still, and his sense of dread deepened, as he steamed down to Canterbury in the express train. He had a seat by a window in a second-class compartment in which were four other passengers, but he was as much alone as if he had had the compartment to himself.

His travelling companions chatted and laughed and jested among themselves, while he looked from his window upon hop-gardens, green fields, and clustering hamlets, with sad, unseeing eyes, and thought of his poverty, his friendlessness, and the slow starvation that lay before him and his young wife.

"I could bear it for myself," he thought, bitterly. "But it is hard to see Lally suffer, and I know she does, although she seems so light-hearted and brave. My poor little wife! Ah, what place have I in the world of gay idlers and strong workers? I am neither the one nor the other. What is to be the end of it all?"

He looked enviously at the workers in a brick-yard the train was passing at that moment. There were men there, coarse and ignorant, but brawny of limb and broad of chest; and there were children too, boys and girls of tender years, working steadily for scanty pay; but they were all workers, and they looked stolidly contented with their lot.

"With all my university education," thought the boy artist, bitterly, "I am less capable of self-support than those ignorant brickmakers. Why did my father bring me up with expensive tastes and like the heir to fine estates, only to cast me off to starve at the first moment I displeased him? What is the empty name of gentleman worth if one cannot keep it and be a worker? If he had put me to some trade I should not have been half so miserable to-day. I am only twenty years old, and my life is a failure at the outset."

The train swept on through new scenes, and the course of the young man's musings was changed, but their bitterness remained in full strength.

"I wonder what my father can want of me," he said to himself presently. "How can he put me in the way of fortune? He promised that I should study law, but he has forgotten the promise. With a profession to depend upon I know I could win a competence. Perhaps it is to speak of this he has sent for me this morning. He surely cannot mean for me," and the young man's brow darkened, "to become a gambler, as he has been? I shall refuse if he should propose it. For my innocent Lally's sake I will keep myself free from his vices."

This resolution was strong within him when he alighted from the train at Canterbury and took a hansom cab to Wyndham village.

The drive of several miles was occupied with speculations as to what his father wanted of him, and with thoughts of his young wife in her dingy lodgings at Brompton, and he did not even notice the houses, farms and villas they passed, nor any feature of the scenery, until the horse slackened his speed to a walk, and the driver opened his small trap in the road, and said: "The house yonder on the ridge, sir, is Hawkhurst, the seat of the Wynde family. Sir Harold Wynde died in India a year ago, you know, sir, and the property belongs to his only child, a daughter. A mile or so beyond is Wyndham village."

Rufus Black turned his gaze upon the fair domain of the Wyndes.

It lay on both sides of the highway, stretching as far as his eye could reach.

The grand old mansion of graystone, with outlying houses of glass glittering in the summer sunshine like immense jewels, the great lawns, the gardens, the park, the cool woods, all these made up one of the fairest pictures the eyes of Rufus Black had ever rested upon.

"How glorious!" he said, involuntarily. "And it all belongs to a lady?"

"Yes, sir, a mere girl," replied the cabman. "She is at school in France. It's a great place is Hawkhurst."

He dropped the trap and urged on his horse, but Rufus continued to look upon the house and estate with great, envious eyes.

Why should all this belong to one, and that one a mere girl, while he wanted bread? His soul was convulsed with bitterness and repining, and the shadow of his trouble rested upon his face.

A few minutes of brisk driving brought them to Wyndham village, which consisted merely of one long, straggling street, lined with houses and gardens.

In the very centre of the street, at four corners formed by the intersection of a country road, was gathered the business portion of the hamlet.

At one corner was the village smithy, from whose open door came the ringing sound of hammer upon anvil.

A group of countrymen were gathered about the door of the village smithy, and a few carts stood before it on the paved street.

At a second corner was the general shop and post-office in one. At a third corner was a rival establishment of the same description, but without the advantage and prestige of the post-office; and at the fourth corner stood the "Wyndham Inn," with its swinging sign, ample court-yard, and hospitable look.

It was an old stone building, with a wide portico in front, on which were tables and chairs.

Rufus Black was driven into the court, and sprang out of the cab at the same moment that the portly, rubicund landlord came out to receive him.

The young man inquired for his father, and was informed that he was in his rooms at the inn.

Rufus paid and dismissed the cabman and followed the landlord into the inn.

He was conducted up a flight of uncarpeted stairs, and the landlord pointed out to him the door of a front chamber as the one at which he was to knock.

Rufus quietly lifted the latch and ushered himself into the room, closing the door behind him.

The room was a pleasant little country parlour, with three casement windows, a faded carpet on the floor, cane-seated furniture, and a jug of flowers on the mantel-shelf. The sunlight streamed in, but its heat was tempered by the delicious breeze.

The Honourable Craven Black was not in the room, but there were vestiges of his occupancy on every side. Upon a small table stood his massive dressing-case, with mirror and brushes mounted in exquisitely carved ivory, and with boxes and bottle-stoppers of finely chased and solid gold.

All the appointments of the large case were luxurious in the extreme, and Rufus thought bitterly that the sum which that Sybaritic affair had cost would be a fortune to him in his own present destitution.

A beautifully inlaid writing case, a tobacco jar of the finest Sèvres porcelain, a Turkish pipe mounted in gold and amber, a liqueur case, and various other costly trifles were scattered lavishly about.

The Honourable Craven Black had never denied himself a luxury in his life, and these things he carried with him wherever he went, as necessary to his comfort and happiness.

Rufus Black's lips curled as he looked on these luxuries, and mentally calculated their cost. He was in the midst of his calculation when the door of the adjoining bedroom was opened from within, and his father came out, habited in slippers and dressing-gown, and with an Indian embroidered cap of scarlet and gold poised lightly on his fair head.

His light eyes opened a little wider than usual as he beheld his son, and his usual cynical smile showed itself disagreeably around his white teeth.

"So you've come at last, have you?" he exclaimed. "I expected you yesterday."

"I received your letter this morning soon after breakfast, sir," answered Rufus, "and I came on at once by the express train. I have changed my lodgings, and the letter was sent on from my old to my new address."

Mr. Black eyed his son critically, his cynical smile deepening.

"You have a general out-at-the-elbows look," he observed. "You've gone down hill since I threw you over. You look hungry and desperate!"

"I am both," was the reply, in a reckless tone; "and I have reason to be. I am starving!"

Mr. Black flung himself into the only easy-chair the room afforded, and made a gesture to his son to be seated on the couch.

Rufus obeyed.

"You are in the mood I hoped to find you," declared the father, with a disagreeable laugh. "Desperate—starving! That is better than I expected. What has become of all your fine anticipations of wealth and fortune to be achieved with your brush? You do not find it easy to paint famous pictures?"

"I mistook my desires for ability," cried Rufus, his eyes darkening with the pain of his confession.

"I have a liking for painting, and I fancied that liking was genius. I find myself crippled by not knowing how to do anything well. My pictures bring me in fifteen shillings apiece, and cost me three days' work. I could earn more at brick-making—if I only knew how to make bricks. When you sent me to the university, father, you said I should study a profession. I demand of you the



fulfilment of that promise. I want some way to earn my living."

"Better get a living without work," said Mr. Black, coolly. "I don't like work, and I don't believe you do. You want to study law, but your talents are not transcendent, my son—you will never sit upon the woolstack."

"If I can earn two hundred pounds a year I will ask nothing more," said Rufus, bitterly. "I have discovered for myself that my abilities are mediocre. I shall never be great as anything—unless as a failure! But if I can only glide along in the great stream of mediocre people, and be nothing above or below them, I shall be content."

"And you say this at twenty years old?" cried his father, mockingly. "You talk like one of double your years. Whither have your hopefulness, your bright dreams, your glowing anticipations, gone? You must have had a hard experience in the last three months to be willing to settle down into a hard-working drudge."

"My experience has been hard."

"I believe you. You look beaten out, worn out, discouraged. Now, Rufus, I have sent for you that I may make your fortune as well as mine. There is a grand prospect opening before you, and you can be one of the richest men in England if you choose to be sensible. But you must obey my orders."

"I cannot promise that before knowing what you demand," said the son, his face clouding. "I have no sympathy with your manner of life, father. If you had not the advantage of titled connexions, and did not bear the title of 'Honourable,' you would be called an adventurer. You know your would. I want nothing to do with your ways of life. I will not be a gambler—not for all the wealth in England!"

"Don't refuse till you are asked," said Mr. Black, harshly. "Don't imagine that I want to corrupt your fine principles by making a gambler of you. I am no gambler, even though I play at cards. I play only as gentlemen play. The game I have in hand for you is easily played, if you have but ordinary skill. I can make you master of one of the finest estates in England if you but say the word."

"Honourably? Can you do it honourably?" cried Rufus, eagerly.

"Certainly. I would not propose anything dishonourable to one of your nice sense of honour," said Mr. Black, with sarcastic emphasis.

"What is it you would have me do?"

"You are young, enthusiastic, good looking, and well educated," said Mr. Black, without paying heed to his son's question. "In short, you are fitted to the business I have in hand. I intended to give you a professional education, but if you obey me you won't want it, and if you do not obey me you may go to the dogs. I suppose your poverty has driven that little low-born music teacher out of your head?"

"What has she to do with this business?"

"Nothing whatever. I want to make sure that you are well rid of her, but perhaps it would be as well to leave her name out of the question. You say you are starving. Now, if you will solemnly promise to obey me I will advance you fifty pounds to-day, with which you can fit up your wardrobe, and gratify any luxurious desires you may have."

Rufus Black's eyes sparkled.

"Speak," he said, impatiently. "I am desperately poor. I would do almost anything for fifty pounds. What do you want done?"

Again Craven Black laughed softly, well pleased with his son's mood.

"Did you see Hawkhurst as you came?" he asked, with seeming irrelevancy. "It's one of the grandest places in Kent."

"I saw it; the driver pointed it out to me."

"How did it look to you?"

"Like heaven."

"How would you like to be master of that heaven?"

Rufus stared at his father with wide, incredulous eyes.

"You are chaffing me," said the young man, his countenance falling.

"I am in serious earnest. The owner of Hawkhurst is a young girl, who is expected home from school to-day. She has lived the life of a nun in her French school, and does not know one young man from another. She will be beset with suitors, immediately, and the one who comes first stands the best chance of winning her. I want you to make love to her and marry her."

Rufus Black's face paled. The suggestion nearly overcame him. The project looked stupendous and chimerical.

"I wondered that you should be down here at Wyndham, father," he said, "and I suppose you are here because you had formed some design upon this young heiress. Do you know her?"

"No, but I know her step-mother, who is her personal guardian," explained Craven Black. "Do you remember the handsome widow, Mrs. Hathaway, whom you once saw at the theatre in my charge?"

She married Sir Harold Wynde. He died in India last year, leaving her well jointured. I came down to see her the other day, and it seems that she remembers me with her old affection. In short, Rufus, I am engaged to marry Lady Wynde, and the wedding is to take place in October. She is her step-daughter's guardian, as I said, and will have unbounded influence to back up your suit. The field is clear before you. Go in and win!"

Rufus grew yet paler, and his voice was hoarse as he asked:

"And this is your scheme for making me rich?"

"It is. The girl has a clear income of seventy thousand pounds a year. As her husband you will be a man of consequence. She owns a house in town, a shooting-box in the Scottish Highlands, and other houses in England. You will have horses and hounds, a yacht—if you wish it, at your marine villa, and a bottomless purse. You can paint wretched pictures, and hear the fashionable world praise them as divine. You can become a member of Parliament. All careers are open to the fortunate suitor of Nova Wynde."

The picture was dazzling enough to the half-starved and desperate boy. He liked all these things his father enumerated—the houses, the horses, the luxuries, the money, and the luxurious ease and the honours.

He had found it hard to work, and harder to dispose of his work. All the bitterness and hardness of his lot arose before him in black contrast with the brightness and beauty that would mark the destiny of the favoured lover of young Nova Wynde.

He arose and walked the floor with an impetuous tread, an expression of keen anguish and keener longing in his eyes.

His father watched him with a furtive gaze, as a cat watches a mouse. It was necessary to his plans that his son should marry Nova Wynde, and he was sanguine that he would be able to bring about the match.

"Well," he said, tiring of the quick, impetuous walk of his son, "what do you say?"

"It is impossible!" returned Rufus, abruptly.

"Utterly impossible."

"Why, if I may be allowed to ask?" inquired Mr. Black, blandly, although a scowl began to gather on his fair forehead.

"Because—because—the young lady may have other designs for herself—I can't marry her for her money—I can't give up Lally!"

"The—the young person who taught music? I understood you to say that she was a corn-chandler's daughter. You prefer a low-born, low-bred creature to a wealthy young lady like Miss Wynde? For a young man educated as you have been your good taste is remarkable. You have a predilection for high-class society, I must say. What is the charm of this not-to-be-given-up 'Lally'? Is she beautiful?"

"She is beautiful to me."

"Which means that she is beautiful to no one else. The beauty which requires love's spectacles to distinguish it is ugliness to every one but the lover. Low born and low bred," repeated Mr. Black, dwelling upon the words as if they pleased him, "with a pack of poor and ignorant relations tacked to her skirts, ugly by your own confession, what a brilliant match she would be for the son of the Honourable Craven Black!"

"She has no poor relations," said Rufus, hotly.

"She has no relations except a great-aunt, whose name she does not know, and who very likely does not dream of her existence. It is true that Lally's father was a corn-chandler, but he was an honest one, and more than that, he was an intelligent, upright gentleman. You arch your brows, as if a man could not be a tradesman and a gentleman. If the world gentleman has any meaning, he was a gentleman."

"I do not care to discuss the subtle meaning of words; I am willing to accept them at the valuation society puts upon them. The pedigree of 'Lally' is of no interest to me. I merely want to know if you mean to marry Nova Wynde and be rich, or marry your 'Lally' and starve. If you are willing to starve yourself, are you willing to have 'Lally' starve also? With your fine ideas of honour, I wonder you can wish to drag that girl into a marriage that will be to her but a slow death."

A groan burst from the youth's lips.

He wrung his hands weakly, while the secret of his marriage trembled on his tongue. But he dared not tell it. He was afraid of his father with a deadly fear, and more than that, he had yet some hope of receiving assistance from his parent.

"I cannot give her up, father," he said, hoarsely.

"I beg you to help me in some way, and let me go. You are not rich, I know, but you have influence. You could get me a situation under Government, in the Home Office, Somerset House, or as secretary to some nobleman. If you will do this for me I will bless you while I live. Oh, father, be merciful to me. Give me a little help, and let me go my way."

"By Heaven, I will not! If you cling to that girl you shall have not one penny from me, not one word of recommendation. You can drift to the hospital or the almshouse, and I will not raise a finger to help you! I will not even give one farthing to save you from a pauper's burial. I swear it!"

Craven Black uttered the vow in a tone of utter implacability, and Rufus knew that the heavens would sooner fall than his father would relent. A despair seized upon him, and again he wrung his hands, as he cried out, recklessly:

"I must cling to her, father. Cast me off if you will, shower imprecations upon me as you choose—but Lally is my wife!"

Craven Black was stupefied for the moment. An apoplectic redness suffused his face, and his eyes gleamed dangerously.

"Your wife? Your wife?" he muttered, scarcely knowing that he spoke.

"Yes, she is my wife!" declared Rufus, his voice gathering firmness. "I married her three months ago. We have been starving together in a garret at New Brompton. Oh, father—"

"Not one word! Married to that girl? I will not believe it. Have you a marriage certificate?"

"I have. Here it is," and Rufus drew from his pocket-book a slender folded paper. "Read it, and you will see that I tell the truth. Lally Bird is my wife!"

Craven Black took the paper and perused it with strange deliberation, the apoplectic redness still suffusing his face.

When he had finished he deliberately tore the marriage certificate into shreds.

Rufus uttered a cry and sprang forward to seize the precious document, but his father waved him back with a gesture of stern command.

"Idiot!" said the elder man. "The destruction of this paper would not affect the validity of your marriage, if it were valid. But it is not valid."

"Not valid?"

"No; you and the girl are both minors. A marriage of minors without consent of parents and guardians is not binding. The girl is not your wife!"

"But she is my wife. We were married in church—"

"That won't make the marriage binding. You are a minor, and so is she. She had no one to consult, but you married without my consent, and that fact will render the marriage null and void. More than this," and Mr. Black's eyes sparkled wickedly, "you have committed perjury. You obtained your marriage licence by declaring yourself of age, and you will not become of age under some months. Do you know what the punishment is for perjury? It is imprisonment, disgrace, a striped suit, and prison fare."

The young man looked appalled.

"Who would prosecute me?" he asked.

"I would. You have got yourself in a tight box, young man. Your marriage is null and void, and you have committed perjury. Now I will offer you your choice between two alternatives. You can make love to Miss Wynde and marry her, and be somebody; or, if you refuse, I will prosecute you for perjury, will have you sent to prison, and will brand that girl with a name that will fix her social station for life. Take your choice."

Craven Black meant every word he said, and Rufus knew that he did. The young fellow shuddered and trembled, then broke into a wild appeal for mercy, but his father turned a deaf ear to his anguished cry.

"You have my decision," he said, coldly; "I shall not reconsider it. The girl is not your wife, and when she knows her position she will fly from you."

Rufus groaned in his anguish. He knew well the pure soul of his young wife, and he felt that she would not remain in any position that was equivocal, even though to leave him might break her heart. The disgrace, the terror, the poverty of his lot nearly crushed him to the earth.

"What is your answer to be?" demanded Mr. Black.

The poor young fellow sat down, and covered his face with his hands. He was terribly frightened, and the inherent weakness and cowardice of his character, otherwise full of noble traits, proved fatal to him now. He gasped out:

"I—I don't know. I must have time to think. It is all so strange—so terrible!"

"You can have all day in which to consider the matter. I have engaged a bedroom for you on the opposite side of the hall. I will show you to it, and you can think the matter over in solitude."

Mr. Black arose, and conducted his son across the hall to a bedroom overlooking the street and the four corners; and here, with a last repetition of the two alternatives offered him, he left him.

Poor Rufus, weak and despairing, looked the door and dropped upon his knees, sobbing aloud in the extremity of his anguish.

"What shall I do? What can I do?" he moaned.

"She is not my wife. My poor Lally! I am helpless in my father's hands. I shall have to yield—I feel it—I know it. I wish I were dead. Oh, my poor, wronged Lally!"

#### CHAPTER X.

THE home-coming of the heiress of Hawkhurst was far different from that which her father had once lovingly planned for her when looking forward to her emancipation from school.

There was no sign of festivity about the estate, no gathering of tenants to a feast, no dancing on the lawn, no floral arches, no music, no gladness of welcome.

The carriage containing Neva Wynde and Mrs. Artress, and attended by liveried servants, turned quietly into the drive by the lodge gates, halted a moment while Neva spoke to the lodge-keepers, whom she well remembered, then slowly ascended the long, shaded drive towards the house.

Neva looked around her with kindling eyes. The fair, green lawn with its patches of sunshine and shade, the close lying park with the shy deer browsing near the invisible wire-fence that separated the park from the lawn, the odours of the flower-gardens, all these were inexpressibly sweet to her after her years of absence from her home.

"Home again!" she murmured, softly. "Although those who made it the dearest spot in all the world to me are gone, yet still it is home. No place has charms for me like this."

The carriage swept up under the high-pointed arches of the lime trees, and drew up at the porch, where the ladies alighted.

Artress led the way into the house, and Neva followed with a springing step and a wildly beating heart.

The great baronial hall was not brightened with flowers or green boughs. The oaken floor, black as ebony, was polished like jet. The black, wainscoted walls, hung with ancient pictures, glittering shields, a few fowling-pieces, a stag's head with antlers, an ancient bear's head, and other treasures, was wide, cool and hospitable. No servants were gathered here, although Neva looked for them and was disappointed by not seeing them.

Most of the servants had been at Hawkhurst for many years, and Neva regarded them as old friends.

It had been the wish of the butler and housekeeper to marshal their subordinates in the great hall to welcome their young mistress, but Lady Wynde, hearing of their design, had peremptorily forbidden it, with the remark that until she came of age Miss Wynde would not be mistress of Hawkhurst.

Therefore no alternative had remained for the butler and housekeeper but to smother their indignation and submit to Lady Wynde's decree.

Mrs. Artress flung open the door of the drawing-room with an excessive politeness, and said:

"Be kind enough to enter, Miss Wynde, and make yourself comfortable while I inform Lady Wynde of your arrival."

"I am not a guest in my own home, and I decline to be treated as one," said Neva, quietly. "I presume my rooms are ready, and I will go up to them immediately."

"I am not positive," said Artress, hesitatingly, "as to the rooms Lady Wynde has ordered to be made ready for your use. I will ring and see."

"Thank you, but I won't put you to the trouble. I shall resume possession of my old apartments, whatever rooms may have been made ready," said Neva, half haughtily.

Her cheeks burned with a sense of indignation and annoyance at the strangeness of her reception. She had not wished for the rejoicings her father had once planned for her, but she had entered her own house precisely as some hiring might have done, with no one to receive or greet her, no one to care if she had come.

She turned away to ascend the stairs, but paused when her foot on the lowest step, as a door at the farther end of the hall opened, and the housekeeper, rosy and rotund, with cap ribbons flying, came rushing forward with outstretched arms.

"Oh, my dear Miss Neva!" cried the good old woman, who had known and loved the baronet's daughter from her birth. "Welcome home, my sweet lamb! How you have grown—so tall, so beautiful, so bright, and sweet!"

"You dear old Hopper!" exclaimed Neva, springing forward and embracing the good woman with girlish fervour. "I began to think I must have entered a strange house. I am so glad to see you."

Mrs. Artress looked upon this little scene with an air of disgust, and, with a little sniff, hastened up the stairs to the apartments of Lady Wynde.

"Your rooms are ready, Miss Neva," said Mrs. Hopper—"your old rooms. I made sure you wanted them again, because poor Sir Harold furnished them new for you only four years ago. I will go with you upstairs."

Neva led the way, tripping lightly up the broad steps, and flitting along the wide upper hall.

Her rooms comprised a suite opposite those of Lady Wynde. Neva opened the door of her sitting-room and went in.

The portly old butler was arranging wreaths of flowers about the pictures and statuettes, but turned as the young girl came in, and welcomed her with an admixture of warmth and respectfulness that was pleasant to witness. Then he took his basket of cuttings and withdrew, tears of joy flooding his honest eyes.

The girl's sitting-room had been transformed by the loving forethought of the butler into a very bower of beauty.

The carpet was of a pale azure hue starred with arbutus blossoms, and the furniture was upholstered in blue silk of the same delicate tint.

The pictures on the walls were all choice and framed in gilt, and with their wreaths of odorous blossoms gave a fairy brightness to the room.

The silver-mounted grate was crowded thickly with choice flowers from the conservatory, whose colours of white and blue were here and there relieved with scarlet blossoms like living coals.

The wide French windows, opening upon a balcony, were open.

"Ah, this is home!" said Neva, sinking down upon a silken couch, and looking out of one of the windows upon the lawn. "I am glad to be back again, Hopper, but it is a sad home-coming. Poor papa!"

"Poor Sir Harold!" echoed the housekeeper, wiping her eyes. "If he could only have lived to see you grown up, Miss Neva. It was dreadful that he should have been taken as he was. I can't somehow get over the shock of his death."

"I shall never get over it!" murmured Neva, softly.

"I am making you cry the first thing after your return," exclaimed Mrs. Hopper, in self-reproach. "I hope these tears are not a bad omen for you, Miss Neva. I have arranged your rooms," she added, "as they used to be, and if they are not right you have only to say so. You are mistress of Hawkhurst now. Did you bring a maid from Paris, Miss Neva?"

"No, Mrs. Artress said it was not necessary, and my maid at school did not wish to leave France. Mrs. Artress said that Lady Wynde had engaged a maid for me."

"Her ladyship intended to give you her own maid, but I made bold to engage your old attendant, Meggy West, and she is in your bedroom now. She is full of joy at the prospect of serving you again."

Neva remembered the girl Meggy with pleasure, and said so.

"I had dreaded having a strange attendant," she said. "You were very thoughtful, Hopper. I suppose I ought to dress at once. Since Lady Wynde did not meet me at the door she evidently means to be ceremonious, and I must conform to her wishes. I am impatient to see my step-mother, Hopper. Is she as good as she is handsome?"

"I am not fond of Lady Wynde, Miss Neva," replied the housekeeper, colouring. "Her ways are different from any I have been accustomed to, but you must judge of her for yourself. Sir Harold just worshipped the ground she walked on."

Neva did not pursue her questioning, comprehending that Lady Wynde was not adored by the housekeeper, whoever else might admire her.

The young girl was not one to gossip with servants, not even with Mrs. Hopper, who was a lady by birth and education, and she dropped the subject.

Soon afterwards Mrs. Hopper withdrew, and Neva went into her bedroom.

She found here the maid who had attended her before she had left home, and who was now to resume service with her.

The girl was about her own age, bright eyed and red cheeked, hearty and robust, the daughter of one of the Hawkhurst tenants.

Neva greeted her so kindly as to revive the girl's old affection for her with added fervour, and, Neva's trunks having arrived, the process of the toilet was at once entered upon.

The dress of the heiress of Hawkhurst was exceedingly simple, but she looked very lovely when fully attired. She wore a dress and overskirt of white Swiss muslin, trimmed with puffs and ruffles. A broad black sash was tied around her waist, with a big bow and ends at the back. Ear-rings, bracelets, and brooch of jet were her ornaments.

The housekeeper sent up a tempting lunch, and, after partaking of it, Neva went downstairs to the great drawing-room, but it was untenanted. She stood in the large circular window recess, and looked out upon the cool depths of the park, and became absorbed in thought.

More than half an hour thus passed, and Neva was beginning to wonder that no one came to her, when the rustling of silk outside the door was heard, and Lady Wynde came sweeping into the room.

Her ladyship presented a decidedly striking appearance. She had laid aside the last vestige of her mourning garments, and wore a long maize-coloured robe of heavy silk, with ornaments of rubies. Her brunette beauty was admirably enhanced by her attire, and Neva thought she had never seen a woman more handsome or more imposing.

Behind Lady Wynde came Artress, clad in soft gray garb, as usual, and making an excellent foil to her employer.

"Lady Wynde, this is Miss Wynde," said the gray companion, in her soft, cloying voice.

Neva came forward, frank and sweet, offering her hand to her step-mother.

Lady Wynde touched it with two fingers, and stooping, kissed the girl's forehead.

"You are welcome home, Neva," she said, graciously. "I am glad to see you, my dear. I began to think we should never meet. Why, how tall you are—not at all the little girl I expected to see."

"I am eighteen, you may remember, Lady Wynde," returned Neva, quietly. "One is not usually very small at that age."

Her ladyship surveyed her step-daughter with keen scrutiny.

She had already heard Artress's account of the voyage home from Calais, and of Neva's meeting with Lord Townyn, and she was anxious to form some idea of the girl's character.

She saw in the first moment that here was not the insipid "bread-and-butter school-girl" she had expected. The frank, lovely face, so bright and piquant, was full of character, and the red-brown eyes bravely uplifted betrayed a soul awake and resolute.

Neva's glances were as keen as her own, and Lady Wynde had an uncomfortable impression that her step-daughter was reading her true character.

"Sit down, my dear," she said, somewhat disconcerted. "Artress has been telling me about your voyage. Artress is my friend and companion, as I wrote you, and has lived with me so many years that I have learned to regard her as a sister. I hope you will be friends with her. She is an excellent mentor for thoughtless youth."

Neva bowed, but the smile that played for an instant on her saucy lips was not encouraging to the would-be "mentor."

"I shall try not to trouble her," she said, smiling, "although I shall always be glad to receive advice from my father's wife. I trust that you and I will be friends, Lady Wynde, for poor papa's sake."

Lady Wynde sat down beside her step-daughter. Artress retreated to a recessed window and took up her usual embroidery.

Neva exerted herself to converse with her step-mother, and was soon conscious of a feeling of disappointment in her. She felt that Lady Wynde was insincere, a hypocrite, and a double-dealer, and she experienced a sense of uneasiness in her presence.

Could this be the wife her father had adored? she asked herself. Then she accused herself of injustice and harsh judgment, believing that her father could not have been so mistaken in the character of his wife, and, in atonement for her unfavourable opinion, she was very gentle and full of deference.

Lady Wynde congratulated herself upon having won her step-daughter's good opinion, after all.

"I must acquire a thorough control and unbounded influence over her," she thought. "But how can I do it? If her father had only left her stronger injunctions to sacrifice everything to my wishes I think she would obey the injunctions as if a voice spoke to her from the grave. She will obey in all things reasonable, I can see that. But if she has formed a liking for Lord Townyn, how am I to compel her to marry Rufus Black?"

The question occupied her attention even while she talked with Neva. It made her thoughtful through the dinner-hour, and silent afterwards.

Neva was tired, and went to her own rooms for the night soon after dinner, and Lady Wynde and Artress talked together for a long time in low tones.

"I have it!" said her ladyship, exultantly, at last. "I have a brilliant idea, Artress, that will make this girl my bond-slave. But I shall need the co-operation of Craven. I must see him this very evening. It is strange he does not come—"

"He is here," said the gray companion, as the house-door clanged and heavily shut. "I will go to my room."

She slipped like a shadow down the long, triple drawing-room and out at one door as the Honourable Craven Black was ushered in at the other.

Lady Wynde rose to receive him, welcoming him with smiles, and presently she unfolded to him the scheme she had just conceived, and the two conspirators proceeded to discuss it and amplify it, and prepare it for the ensnarement of the baronet's daughter.

(To be continued.)

RESTORATION OF WARWICK CASTLE.—It has been decided to commence the restoration of the



burnt portions of Warwick Castle very shortly, in order that the building may be completed in time for the celebration of the coming of age of Lord Brooke, the earl's eldest son, who is about 19. Meetings are to be held in every town in the country.

AMONG the news brought by the Cape mail it is mentioned that two diamonds, weighing over a thousand carats each, have been found. It should be added, however, that at the Cape the story is disbelieved. The diamonds exported during the year are valued at a million and a half sterling.

THE REPTILE PERIOD.—"The Fortunate Isles," translated from the French of Ogier, is an account of the Canaries. A chapter on the celebrated dragon tree contains the two passages herein transcribed. Written apparently in sober earnest, they are perhaps not the least remarkable contribution to the scientific literature of the year now ended. "It is an undoubted fact that before the great Mediterranean deluge, and to a certain point even after it, strange creatures brought forth in transitional periods inhabited the marshy grounds or those shallow seas which still remained warm. This epoch, called by modern geologists the Reptile Period, produced creatures belonging at once to the animal, vegetable, and mineral kingdoms, or to two only; monstrous products of creative forces; birds, quadrupeds, fish, plants, reptiles, all at once, either united or distinct; the greater number of these have been restored for us by geologists. . . . The dragon has existed. The first man saw the last survivors of these prodigious creatures, and the memory of them has been preserved. The struggles of mankind with the mighty creatures which overran the earth must have been terrible. The excessive alarm of men possessing no weapons in the first ages gave rise to the traditions of formidable beings attacking mankind and destroyed by the demi-gods, strong and brave men."

CURIOSITIES OF THE LONDON DIRECTORY.—As a proof of the vast extent to which the foreign element prevails in the trade and industry of our "great metropolis" it may be desirable to record the fact that in the "Commercial" department of the work the letter Z (in which we cannot detect a single *bona fide* English name) occupies nearly a column and a half. We may also draw some inference as to the proportion of Scottish and Irish elements in the traders of London from the fact that, while the O's (who are nearly all Irish) do not amount to half a column, the Mac's and Mc's—who are mostly, though not wholly Scotch—reach to nearly eleven columns. In the same department we note that the Williamses occupy nearly seven, the Browns and Brownes—of all shades—nearly eight, and the Joneses upwards of nine columns; while, wonderful to relate, the Campbells are comprised in a single column. But it would not be fair to conclude without remembering our old friends the "Smiths," the "Smythas," and the "Smythes." The connections of that widespread family will be glad to learn some simple statistics about the cousinhood. Let all men, then, know that they occupy 19 columns in the "Commercial" department, four columns in the "Trades," nearly one and a half in the "Law," and seven in the "Court." It may be added that, following the fortunes of the "Smiths" in the lesser departments, we find that they number 16 "sworn brokers," eight Members of Parliament, and six London clergymen of various denominations; and that—no doubt in consequence of the overthrow of aristocratic nomination and the throwing open of the Civil Service to personal merit, as tested by competitive examination—they have made their own nearly two columns of the "Official" directory of the Civil Service. All honour to the Smiths.

A NEW MOABITE STONE.—Mr. Henry Lumley, writing from Jerusalem, announces the discovery, in the Moabite country, of a highly important engraved stone. Mr. Lumley writes: "I have been permitted to inspect it, and I must say it bears about it all the significance of antiquity and truth. It measures 36 in. by 18 in. on the surface, is of hard, close granite, and has six lines of written characters almost identical in form with the Sinitic letters. Mr. Shapira, of Jerusalem, who has made the ancient languages of this region his study, has supplied me with a translation, and according to his reading no more valuable record of Biblically-stated facts, made at nearly a contemporary moment with the events which it records, has yet been discovered. It may be, indeed, of more powerful interest than the Moabite stone, for it contains the name of Moses, who may have directed, seen, and approved the inscription himself as a member of the conquest of Moab by Israel under their great leader, and in addition the stone, so far as the inscription is concerned, is in a perfect state. It was brought in here by Bedwin Sheiks from the ruins (or mound) of the city of Medeba, which is seven miles south of Hesbon, 15 miles north of Dibon,

and about 45 miles due east of this place. The characters, which are very clear and nearly perfect, are translated as follows: 'We drove them away—the people of Ar Moab at the Marsh ground, there they made a thank-offering to God, their King, and Jeshurun rejoiced, as also Moses their Leader.' If these words are compared with Numbers, chap. 21, verses 13, 14, and 15, and verses 21 to 30; Deuteronomy, chap. 11, and Joshua, chap. 13, verses 9, 15, and 16, a remarkable coincidence of narrative will be seen. The town of Ar Moab mentioned on the stone is in the delta formed by the two rivers which flow into the River Arnon. The 'Ar Moab' at the marsh ground' of the stone seems to be identical with 'the city that is in the midst of the river' of the 9th verse of the 13th chapter of Joshua."

### WAS IT FATE?

If he had not been so slow of brain or blind in mental vision—a great, honest, humble-hearted fellow in short—he would have understood at once that Clyde Donnington loved him. But to some people in this world the sweetest and rarest knowledge of life comes too late, and perhaps had better not have come at all.

They lingered on the wide, old-fashioned porch a long while. The honeysuckle was in its second blooming, and, now that the dew was falling, all the air around was fragrant with the odor.

Robert Halford had announced half an hour before that he was going away the next day. He did not remember anything so pleasant in his whole life as this month's sojourn had been, but it was not possible to neglect business any longer, for his partner wished to take a holiday, so he must.

Then they talked over some pleasant rambles and two or three evenings spent in rowing on the lake. Clyde managed to introduce pretty, plaintive regrets. It seemed to her that she did all that was womanly, all at least that her delicate senses would allow her to do. Yet she understood in her heart that she did love this man honestly and truly. To be his wife would be the realization of her dearest wish. She felt assured that she could make him happy. Still he asked no question, made no sign.

"You will be returning soon, as well?" he said, presently.

"Yes, only I shall not go joyfully."

And there was a touch of bitterness in her tone. "I can see where a country life must suit women. It is clean, and fresh, and sweet—the distinct change of the seasons brooking what might otherwise become monotonous," he went on.

"I could be happy anywhere if the life suited me," she answered, boldly. "But I do not love teaching—never did, and never will."

"Don't you love children?" he asked, rather surprised at her vehemence.

"Two or three pretty, orderly ones might not be so bad, when you could have the constant training of them, but to be outwitted and circumvented in every possible manner is not an entertaining. I have outgrown the sentimental part," he continued, almost brusquely. "Let us talk of something else."

So they did until the great, old-fashioned clock in the hall struck ten. Then he held her hand in a lingering clasp, and said good night half a dozen times.

"You will need some one to welcome you to London," he exclaimed, cordially. "May I be the one? Where can I call on you?"

"I don't know at present. Among other perplexities, I shall have to find a new abode."

"He had a kind of dim, vague feeling that it would be very nice to gather her to his heart and smoothe away these tangles and thorns in her path. But he had never made love to a woman in all his twenty-eight years, and it appeared a great and peculiar undertaking.

If people only could understand how sweet the simply told truths are in this life how much misery and waiting might be saved. All she had to say was—

"If you will send me a little note when you are settled."

"I shall be glad to see you at any time."

"Good night. It is not to be good bye."

Then he stooped and kissed her hand.

She stood there half an hour after he had gone. Did he care for her at all? Why should she love him? Why should every word, every touch draw her nearer to him?

Even her hand had a new sacredness since his lips had pressed it.

Clyde turned and went in. Her aunt sat by the table darning her stockings.

"Well, is it all settled between you?"

"Settled—what?"

But Clyde's face was scarlet.

"Are you two people engaged?" asked her aunt, with the most vexing deliberation.

"Engaged? No!"

Clyde's tone was angry.

"Why, here he has been dangle about for a month. Any of your cousins would have had him fast by this time, and they were nice girls too, if I do say it myself."

Certainly Mrs. Sherman's four daughters had married well, and were unexceptionable matrons.

"I couldn't ask him."

"I'd have managed to make him ask me."

Clyde lighted her candle and went to bed. Here she had a little cry upon the unprofitableness of all things in general, and the utter weariness of life when you were chained to a groove that you hated. It was sad to be so miserable at three-and-twenty.

Clyde Donnington had received two offers of marriage thus far. One was from a fast young man, a banking clerk, who drank a little and frequented the races. He married a friend of Clyde's out of spite, and eighteen months afterward absconded as a defaulter. So she had no regret there, since it was proved that he had never been strictly honest. The other was from a well-to-do widower, with three unruly boys, who had threatened "to punch the head of any step-mother."

She had never cared for any man until she came to Robert Halford.

She was one of the women who could have made a lovely and happy home. Given congenial surroundings, and she would have been as bright and cheerful as a bird, singing as blithely all day long. A husband and children to love and tend, rooms to beautify with the hidden prettiness that kept floating through her brain—ah, what a complete and enchanting life it would be!

November came in dull, cold, and dismal. No Robert Halford yet. Should she call herself to mind by a little note, inviting him to visit her, now that she was settled? Who wrote two; one was too cold, the other too friendly to be sent to a man who after all did not care for her.

Clyde blamed him unjustly. He had been spending six weeks on a business tour.

"A gentleman wishes to see you in the parlour," said Mrs. Lidencomb one drizzling afternoon. "He has been here as long as an hour."

Clyde's heart was in her throat. She brushed her beautiful golden-brown hair, flew into a pretty blue cashmere, and ran down bright as a rose, though she would not admit her hope to herself.

Alas! a middle-aged gentleman, slightly bald, and with rather weak eyes met her gaze—a Mr. Yates from Brighton.

Her father's relatives had lived there, but they had never troubled themselves about her hereafter.

"Was it Miss Clyde Donnington, daughter of Stephen M. and Lucy Clyde Donnington whom he had the pleasure of seeing?"

"She was the person," she answered, in a somewhat chilly manner.

"Had she any positive, legal proof? It was a matter of great importance."

She had her parents' marriage certificate, and a number of letters written during their courtship, and afterwards, when her father had been absent for six months. Her old nurse was also living, and several relatives who could testify to any point.

"Why, what a straightforward business woman you are." And the grim face relaxed. "I will tell you my reason for being so particular. When all this is proved beyond a doubt a large fortune awaits you."

"A fortune!" gasped Clyde.

What did she want of a fortune? Better a hundred times that it had been Robert Halford.

In the course of an hour Mr. Yates made her understand the matter thoroughly. These proofs were to be collected, and certain affidavits obtained, when she was to proceed at once to Brighton to claim the estate of her grandfather, George Donnington, as the nearest of kin.

After that night she did not feel at all bewildered, but went calmly about her business. If it should be as much as five thousand pounds, she could live like a queen. Perhaps—well, if she did send for Mr. Halford then, what matter?

Four days afterwards she left for Brighton with Mr. Yates.

The distant Donnington relatives were ready to contest every inch of the ground. Indeed they were sure then that a will was somewhere in existence, though each had scouted such an idea before. The amount in dispute was four times five thousand. At this Clyde opened her eyes in amazement. It would never do for Aunt Sherman to snub her again.

Clyde became acquainted with one of the disappointed heirs, Mr. Lawrence Keith, a handsome, resolute young fellow of six-and-twenty, admitted to the bar.

They began by saying all manner of sharp and disagreeable things to one another, but in a fortnight



[OVERHEARD.]

Mr. Keith threw up his case, to the great disgust of the other relatives.

"There is not the shadow of a chance against you, Miss Donnington," he admitted, gracefully. "So instead of sending good money after bad I shall wash my hands of the business and return to my legitimate occupation. I wish you all joy and happiness. It is a disappointment, to be sure, but I am not going to let it mar or embitter my future."

He looked so noble and manly as he uttered this that Clyde was won at once, and frankly expressed her desire for a better acquaintance.

Thus it fell out that Lawrence Keith became in some degree her champion against the rest. He was different from any man with whom she had been brought into contact hitherto, though there are plenty of his stamp sprinkled through the world. Easy, affable, well read, with a touch of imperiousness in his nature, and a strand of delicate, winning tenderness as well—men who love women and make them wonderfully happy while the passion lasts, but they have the marvellous capacity for two or three at a time.

He resolved to win Clyde Donnington. If she had been ugly, ill bred, or a dozen years older, the fortune would not have tempted him. But she was piquant and charming as well as accomplished.

Without being actually in love, Clyde was deeply interested. Mr. Keith had so many delightful traits. He brought her the daintiest bouquets, the finest music, and took her to everything that was worth seeing or hearing.

Then he assumed the faintest touches of authority, very fascinating to most women, who, after all, like to have the power taken out of their hands, to obey unconsciously.

In the meantime the suits were discontinued.

Clyde made herself acquainted with the circumstances of the disappointed relatives, and sent generous gifts to the poorer ones. Indeed it rather

puzzled her to know what to do with the wealth that now kept pouring in continually.

One night Lawrence Keith became unusually demonstrative. Simply kissing her hand would not content him.

"How cruel you are!" he exclaimed, at length. "If it were not for this unlucky fortune, I should ask you to marry me. Clyde, you must know, you do know that I love you! Send me away if you will, if you must, but you cannot prevent my burning this knowledge into your very soul. No man will ever love you so again. To me this is a revelation. Oh, Clyde! Clyde!"

She could never quite explain to herself afterwards how it had come about. This passionate, adoring love thrilled through every pulse of her being, confused her brain and soul. It was so new, and—yes, quite delicious to be so carried out of herself. The result was a half-engagement.

"I am glad it is the fashion for women to keep their property in their own hands," he said, laughingly. "I shall ask Mr. Yates to tie it up hard and fast."

"You will do no such thing. Oh, Lawrence, if I trust you with my own soul, I trust you with everything. I and mine must be your first care."

"My generous darling," he murmured, tenderly. "If she had known more of men—but perhaps the finest part of womanhood is in its unwisdom."

She took up the paper the next morning, and glanced over the marriages. The very first was Mr. Robert Halford and Mrs. Lillie Day.

A sense of coldness and perfect freedom crept over her. Not that she had been bound before, only she was intensely loyal to herself, and felt continually under the shadow of that old penchant.

But Mr. Halford certainly had not loved her. It was weak and unwomanly to cherish a useless regard for him. And yet—if the two men could change places!

However, the wooing sped apace. In the month of May Lawrence was the most eager and devoted of lovers. Two evenings in the week he had engagements, the rest were spent with her.

Mr. Yates did not cordially endorse the engagement, but the one doubt was just enough to rouse Clyde into a warmer regard.

They talked a little of an early marriage and a tour on the Continent.

Clyde was absolutely wild over the prospect, and grew more lovely every day. It was a splendid thing to be rich after all.

Late in May Clyde was invited to a wedding party a few miles out of town. The bride was a niece of the lady with whom Clyde had been staying. She had been to London, and just returned, and this reception was to take place at her mother's.

The house was handsome, the guests agreeable, yet Clyde felt strange and ill at ease in spite of her elegance. She could hardly endure Lawrence to be out of her sight, and clung to him with a sense of helplessness. How brilliant and entertaining he was! Ah, how could one help being proud of him?

The moon was at its full, and gave the grounds a suggestive, fairy-like appearance. Clyde was warm and tired with the dancing, and the air without was balmy as summer. Would Lawrence take a turn among the evergreens with her?

He was not to be found. She threw a scarf over her head, and wandered down the path. Here were a pair of lovers on a rustic bench, so she made a sudden turn out of their vicinity. How lovely and cool and calm it was! If Lawrence were but here!

"Celia, you are crazy!"

Lawrence Keith's voice! From what nook or corner did it come? She glanced around in affright.

"No; I'm not crazy. I heard the rumour that you were engaged to her, as I told you last week, and I believed your explanation when you said it had only been a matter of business. But since then I have learned some of the facts. So I crept up to the window to-night, and watched you both. You were devoted to her, and she loves you—loves you, I say! She is a great heiress too, but you belong to me. Only last week you said you never could love any one so well."

"Hush, hush, child! Let me take you home, and we will talk on the way. Come. I shall think you are positively insane."

"Only say that you do love me once more! Promise never to marry her—"

The voice was lost in the distance. Clyde was cool enough then; she returned to the house and made a fresh plunge into the dancing.

Some one wondered where Lawrence Keith had disappeared.

"In the smoking-room, no doubt," another made answer.

He said the same thing when he returned fifteen minutes later, and astounded Clyde by being his usual gay, graceful self.

She said nothing that evening, but went to Mr. Yates on the following morning.

"I think you are a true friend to me," she began, "and I am going to test it. I want you to learn some particulars about a person for me—a girl whose first name is Celia, and she lives somewhere in the vicinity of young Mrs. Hathaway's parents. This is of much importance to me. I want to know her name in full, and the house in which she resides."

Mr. Yates scrutinized the questioner closely. Clyde's face was calm and clear.

"I think I can tell you just what you want to know," he began, deliberately. "The girl's name is Celia Wylie, and she was once a sweetheart of your—of Mr. Keith's. You have heard some foolish story, and are either jealous or indignant. If you really love him, let me beg of you to pay no attention to it. A woman must be content not to ask her husband what he did before he married her. It is better for her own peace of mind."

Clyde flushed a little then.

"I shall have the most perfect trust in the man I marry," she said.

He smiled rather grimly.

"That is reserved for girls of sixteen. I want to say that Lawrence Keith stands as high as the average of young men. He may have had a great fancy for this girl, but he showed his good sense in not getting too deeply entangled. I do believe that he loves you."

"I am going to convince myself."

"Do nothing rash or foolish, I entreat you."

She smiled calmly, resolving in her mind her next step. This was to see Miss Wylie. Taking a carriage, she directed the driver to inquire in the vicinity.

The place was soon found. Clyde asked for Miss Wylie, but did not send in her name. She was ushered into a cheerful-looking parlour, and had not long to wait.



Something beyond astonishment was visible in Miss Wylie's face as she entered the room—consternation and absolute fear. She was a mere child compared to this dignified, self-possessed woman.

"Do not fear," Clyde began, reassuringly. "Miss Donnington!"

The words seemed to burst from her lips.

"Yes. You may think my coming strange, but I want to hear from you the truth of a story that I can only guess at. You have been engaged to Lawrence Keith?"

Celia Wylie's face was scarlet. What was there in that calm voice that impelled her to confidence? Would it be best or wisest to confess all? For Lawrence's sake—

Up to this moment Clyde had not asked herself how deeply she cared for Mr. Keith. The shock to confidence had laid in ruins that fair structure hitherto supposed to be love. This girl had not entrapped Lawrence by any specious arts, or taken him at an unguarded moment. She was too young, too guileless, and stirred not the first pang of jealousy within Clyde's heart.

She crossed the room and took her hand.

"My child," she began, calmly, "I want you to tell me the simple truth. It will be better for us all. Until last evening I was not even aware of your existence. I have been misled—deceived."

"You don't love him!" Celia exclaimed, passionately. "You are too calm—too indifferent. I saw you last night—a mere glimpse it was—but it made me crazy, and yet I had heard—yes, he is mine; he loves me!" she declared, with uncontrollable vehemence. "It is your money that tempted, and his losses. It was hard to have all his hopes swept away by your coming."

Clyde felt a rising flush in her face.

"Yes, I think it was the fortune that tempted him. I want to know how much he can be to you again."

"To me?"

Celia Wylie studied her antagonist in amazement. Had she any other errand than to triumph over her?

"Yes. Can the mistake be rectified, the past healed? Do you love him well enough to forgive him?"

Miss Wylie looked like one in a dream.

"Love him? Forgive him? Why, he is all the world to me, my very life. It is my one comfort in this misery that even if he should marry you he never can cease to love me."

Happy child so to believe!

Clyde envied the fervent faith. She questioned if Celia was not right, though it was with great bitterness of heart.

"I want you to tell me all your story, as you would to a sister," she said, entreatingly. "I do believe that you love him the more, and have the first claim. Do not be afraid."

Something in her calm sweetness won Miss Wylie at length.

Clyde listened to the story with some secret pangs. She admitted to herself that this lover of hers had not been honest or manly. He had kept a half-faith with Celia, and even now had persuaded her that it was a sacrifice to give her up for wealth, but that the fortune was absolutely necessary. Even if he did not marry Miss Donnington they must wait for years before they could venture upon such a step. In event of the marriage he and Celia would still be the dearest of friends.

Clyde left her very sore at heart, yet quite resolved upon her future course. She had been very strongly attracted by Lawrence Keith, but she was not in love. She wondered indeed how she had come to make such a mistake. Being past the first boundless faith of girlhood, she could reason calmly and look at the facts of the case. It was quite easily settled when they came to be analyzed.

She taxed Lawrence with the double dealing, but he met her with a man's ready, sophistical reasoning, and insisted that he did love her, that he always should entertain a regard for her different from what any other woman had ever inspired him with. It was his misfortune, rather, if he was able to discern people's virtues so readily.

In spite of herself, she did not hate him, hardly despised him. She made him promise to marry Celia, and, feeling some compunctions as to being the cause of his misfortune, she settled upon Celia, in her own right, the sum of a thousand pounds.

The beauty and romance seemed gone out of her life. She felt quite like an old woman, and the only tangible comfort was her money. She could have all the ease and luxury she wanted, and they were not items to be despised.

Her welcome was a sort of ovation. Every one thought she had improved by the rest and the good fortune, and congratulated her very cordially.

Among her friends was one whom she really loved,

a Mrs. Jeannette Van Alstyne, a widow of four or five and thirty, who, from nearly the topmost round of social life, from a series of deaths and misfortunes, had been plunged into poverty.

This afternoon Clyde carried her off home with her, and the two women had a cosy tea by themselves.

This came of it a week later. Clyde wanted a companion, a friend, a chaperone. She was rich enough to indulge herself with almost anything, and now, if Jennie would give her aid and countenance, she for her part would make it fully as profitable and more pleasant than teaching.

"Why, you are a regular fairy godmother!" declared Mrs. Van Alstyne, touched to the heart. "But is there not some relative who ought to have the opportunity instead?"

No doubt some of her cousins would be delighted, but as they had never taken any pains to make Clyde's past life particularly pleasant she felt that she did not owe them any duty or favours.

She could hardly have chosen more wisely. Mrs. Van Alstyne was accomplished, lady-like, and possessed a certain worldly tact that understood how to make the best of everything. Clyde was satisfied to have the care of thinking and planning taken off her hands.

That autumn they went abroad. Lawrence Keith and Celia Wylie were married. There was nothing left for Clyde but to enjoy herself and her money.

Sometimes, it is true, she looked back upon what had been with a kind of desperate envy. The love had been very sweet, despite its utter selfishness and falsity. Yet it led her to suspect all other smiles and tender tones.

Of course a woman with such a fortune would not lack admirers. She had them in abundance, so did Mrs. Van Alstyne. They had a taste of the gaieties of Paris, the social life of Florence, the grandeur of Rome, and beauty and enjoyment everywhere.

Just six years from the summer of her first love dream she was in London again. Mrs. Van Alstyne was Mrs. Beach. She had married a wealthy widower with two grown-up sons—one in business, the other at college.

Mr. Beach was a tall, fine-looking man, who carried himself and his years well, and adored his new wife in a fashion that must have been gratifying to any woman.

Clyde was Clyde Donnington still. On her next birthday she would be thirty. She still looked young, however, and possessed a subtle grace of girlishness that would always linger, like the scent of a rose. In all these years she had met with no love that suited her. Not that she was dissatisfied with life—far from it; neither had she any desire to go back to poverty and school teaching.

Lawrence Keith and his wife were prospering. She had heard, too, about Robert Halford. His wife was one of the weak, silly, fascinating women. From an acquaintance Clyde learned the following:

"She had been a widow about a year, and was staying with her uncle, Halford's partner, when he met her. She made a dead set at him, pleaded loneliness and dependence, and was very sweet. It's strange that these real noble and generous-hearted men cannot see an inch into the future. He let her wind him round her finger, and, as she did not desire a long engagement, they were married almost immediately. She is just as frivolous as she was before."

Mr. Beach rented a cottage at Brighton for the summer of a friend who was going abroad. Mrs. Beach insisted that Clyde should accompany them, and she was quite in the humour for any new dissipation.

So they sent their trunks, servants, and horses, and followed at their leisure.

Clyde was delighted with the newness. In these years she had grown very stylish, and was quite a belle. Invitations were showered upon them. The first that she attended was an elegant dinner. Going through the wide hall, she came face to face with some one who uttered an exclamation of surprise.

"Oh, Miss Donnington! This is indeed a pleasure."

"Mr. Halford!"

The crowd surged in.

Her escort, a Mr. Sargent, seated her, and Mr. Halford took the next place.

It seemed to Clyde as if she had just waked from a troubled dream. This was not quite the Robert Halford she had known. If anything, he had grown handsomer, and there was an easy self assurance that he had lacked before. Indeed in ten minutes they were chatting as agreeably as you please.

Somewhere, though, he stumbled over the old grubs that had charmed him so much. The new polish had not eradicated them.

After the dinner there were dancing, card-playing, and flirting.

Mr. Halford found his wife and introduced her—a still pretty but faded woman, with floating yellow hair, languishing purple blue eyes, and exquisite sloping shoulders.

"Oh!" Mr. Sargent exclaimed, "I was just looking for you. They are going to begin a waltz. Are you not engaged for it, Miss Donnington? Halford doesn't dance," he added, with a laugh.

"I do not wish to, Mr. Sargent. No apology is needed."

And she smiled cordially.

"Mr. Halford must take care of her then," said Mrs. Halford. "Robert, I wonder if she has seen those Asiatic views? Mrs. Cameron has some marvellous ones, only I'd rather dance than look at all the pictures in the world. But do be entertaining."

With that she floated off on Mr. Sargent's arm. Her one accomplishment or gift was dancing, and she was in as great demand as any of the young girls.

"They are views from various parts of Hindostan, heathen temples, and forest jungles," Mr. Halford explained respecting the pictures. "Would you not like to look them over?"

Clyde signified her assent.

The small ante-room was deserted, so they had it all to themselves. He arranged the rack, seated her with a gentle courtesy, and they began to inspect a series of magnificent engravings. The conversation did not flag for a moment. During these years Robert Halford had learned to talk.

If he had been free, and this their first meeting, it would have been a case of love at first sight. They saw how admirably their thoughts, feelings, and tastes harmonized. They had ripened so much, gone more deeply into the heart of all things. Society and solitude had taught them both many rare secrets.

The swell of the music and the perfume of the flowers were just near enough to lend a kind of enchantment to the scene.

They talked and talked until the place began to fill with warm and tired dancers.

Clyde glanced at her watch in amazement. They had been there a full hour.

"You must be tired," he said. "Let us take a turn in the walks below. It is the perfection of a summer night, except that there is no moon, but I like starlight better."

She was thinking whether she ought to walk with him.

He drew her out, however, with an undefined sense of authority.

"Is it too cool?" he asked, noticing that she lagged a little; "I might go back for a shawl."

"No, never mind."

"Let me put this round your shoulders."

He shook out a handkerchief with a summery, sweet-clover fragrance, and tied it about her neck. Ah, if he had so taken possession of her in that old time! Something like absolute fear actually flashed across her mind.

They rambled under the trees, and continued their odd, fascinating conversation. All the while she had a faint misgiving that it was not quite right for her to be there alone with Robert Halford. If she had any charm for him it must of course be deepened, and she felt that she did charm him as never before.

They encountered Mrs. Beach at length.

"Why, I thought some one had spirited you away," she exclaimed. "What have you been doing with yourself all the evening?"

"I do not know that I can give a very coherent account," Clyde returned, laughingly. "Looking at pictures, studying people, rambling a little, and talking a good deal."

"Well, if you have enjoyed yourself and not been dull, I will generously forgive you. I sent Mr. Beach to look after you. Oh, here he comes."

"The carriage is waiting," he announced.

Mr. Halford did not relinquish her until the last moment.

"I am so glad you are here," he said, in a low tone. "It has been such a pleasure to renew the old remembrance. I think we might be something better than mere commonplace acquaintances. The tedium of fashionable life is fearful to a man who doesn't dance or drive fast horses."

"Good night," she answered, but her tone was very sweet and gentle.

Robert Halford watched the carriage out of sight.

"If I had married her," he said to himself, "and I might have; it seems as if I could have taught her to love me then. She has never loved any one perhaps—"

Clyde fell back among the cushions with a sensation at once new, exquisite, and painful.

"I shall never love any man as I might have loved Robert Halford," she admitted to her heart.

Because in one sense the opportunity was past

it did not occur to either of them to reflect as to whether the danger was past as well.

They saw a good deal of each other during the next fortnight. Mrs. Halford was simply a society woman. There was no existence for her beyond its magic pale. She was hungry for excitement, adoration, and pleasure. She did not possess one single domestic quality, and avowed it in the most unblushing manner. They had one child, a little girl of four, who was left continually to the charge of the French nurse, and had already begun a miniature fashionable life. Indeed, she had been so completely taken out of her father's jurisdiction that he did not now attempt to interfere. He was too tender and indulgent, the thinking world said.

But he alone knew of the few fearful contests there had been for supremacy when Mrs. Halford had laid for days in hysterics, and the physician had counselled that she should not be crossed in her desires.

So he yielded gracefully as only the noblest of men can do.

Mrs. Halford's desires were foolish rather than wicked. She passed scathless where better women had been tempted. Her nature was like the sea-sand—one wave washed out the previous impression.

Clyde and Mr. Halford were drawn together by some magnetic influence. They did nothing the world could condemn, unless it was taking solitary walks. But it was such a pleasure to talk unreservedly, though by tacit consent they never discussed themselves or their own lives.

Mr. Halford was recalled to London by the illness of some member of the firm. Although such a step might have appeared providential it was in reality most dangerous.

He spent the long evenings at home, dreaming over the one who might have been his presiding spirit. Long before this he had seen the wisdom of his marriage; now all his miserable loneliness flashed upon him. He wanted to a woman who cared nothing for him individually, one who only rated him at his value in gold—a woman who had made herself very lovable, and professed the most ardent affection for him; but every hour of that courtship had been a fraud and deception on her part. If he were poor to-morrow what then? Well, looking at the dreary life, he hardly cared what happened.

He went to Brighton again to bring Mrs. Halford home. She danced to the latest moment, and turned him over to Clyde, for she was not jealous of her husband, however she might be of her admirers. The whole party returned together, and Mrs. Beach and Mrs. Halford were on invitation terms. Young Mr. Beach of five-and-twenty was another attraction.

So Clyde became a witness to Mr. Halford's infidelities. When a woman loves a man her eyes are so much keener for another's omissions. She comforted in some delicate ways, and was fast becoming a necessity in his life. One night the climax was reached. As it always happens in such matters, it is only a word or a glance. With them it was a sudden, awful flash of consciousness in each other's eyes. Their fair edifice of friendship crumbled, and love stood unabashed in the place.

"I knew it months ago," he said, in a voice hoarse with pain. "You see it now. It would be folly to deny that we love one another in that best and dearest and most enduring manner, and should have been all in all to each other. Oh, Clyde, pity me! Why was I so blind the summer I first saw you? No, don't turn—don't leave me! Let me have one blissful moment dreaming of what might have been with you as my wife."

"Hush," she replied, "hush," and put away the hands that would have taken her, though it was a hard struggle to do it. "To me you have become the embodiment of manly tenderness, truth, and honour. Let us keep our ideals, and not mar them by dragging them down to the dust, and discovering the base clay instead of the fine gold."

He studied her long and earnestly. Many a time afterwards Clyde wondered how she endured the passionate, pleading look. One kiss would have been such a comfort, one clasp in those arms a bliss to remember all her dreary days.

Yet she stood her ground bravely. It was not friendship pleading, but love whose very smile was dangerous. She was too clear eyed to be led away with any sophistries of reasoning.

Terrible moments they were. Great drops of anguish beaded his temples.

"You are right, Clyde. Thank Heaven for your strength. I feel as weak as a very child. We will not stain our souls by dallying with any specious falsehood. Since we cannot be friends—"

"It is best to part."

He went slowly out of the room and left her alone. If he had stayed he would have pleaded, and she might have relented. Better a little rigid self-

denial now than a great deal of heart-break hereafter.

It was very odd, Mrs. Beach thought, that Clyde should want to go off into a little country town when the season was at its height, and when two admirable offers of marriage awaited her. But she went and nursed Aunt Sherman through a long attack of rheumatism.

Not in a week or a month did Clyde Donnington accept her fate. She said to herself, dozens of times, or her evil genius said it for her, that it would be no worse for her to have a dear and tender friendship with Mr. Halford than it was for Mrs. Halford to accept the flatteries and attentions of society idlers.

There was no true marriage, but merely a bond of convenience legalized by custom. Neither loved. There was no true home or home virtues. But her duty was to keep her own soul pure and clean. By slow degrees she came to peace. She would live her own life, and not mar it with any unhallowed marriage.

She met them again the next winter.

Mr. Halford was simply courteous. He saw other men pay her pleasant attentions, or talk low in the pauses, but he kept a firm guard over himself, and would not be tempted.

At the beginning of the new year there seemed to be a general panic in business. One house after another went down, and women hastened to economize in dresses and parties. But Mrs. Halford would submit to no restrictions. Her own way and her own pleasures she must have. So there was another great crash.

Robert Halford paid every demand scrupulously. His elegant house, his horses and carriage were given up at once. I am not sure but that he was glad to get out of the wearying round of fashion. There were a few thousands left, and he took a subordinate position, though a fine opportunity offered for him to retrieve his fortune.

"I should have to borrow nearly all the capital," he said to a friend. "I do not feel justified in risking the money of others."

But one day Clyde Donnington came to him. Her face seemed to have grown nobler and sweeter during the past year.

She laid a roll on his desk.

He glanced it over in amazement.

"I heard through Mr. Beach of the offer you made," she said, in a slow, calm tone. "They all think it one chance out of a thousand. I want you to take it—for my sake. Besides this, I have reserved fifteen thousand for myself, in case of any misfortune. If you should prosper, as you will, you can repay me principal and interest, thus making it a mere business transaction."

"You do not know all my reasons," he returned, huskily. "Were I prosperous once more, even in appearances it would be quite impossible to restrain Mrs. Halford from her old extravagances. I will not risk another person's money."

"It was partly for her sake that I came. She must feel the change keenly. You will try once again?"

"Clyde!" he exclaimed, much moved, "you are an angel! I do not deserve such kindness at your hands."

However he did begin again, and prospered. But the blow had been too much for Mrs. Halford. She rallied a little, and then sank into hopeless invalidism. Her chief indulgence now was the carriage, for dancing and gaiety were quite beyond her waning strength. After two miserable years she died much as she had lived. Robert Halford was devoted to the last moment.

A few weeks later he called upon Clyde.

"I have prospered beyond my expectations," he said, "and shall now begin to set apart a sum every year towards the payment of my debt. But beyond that I want to ask a favour. Do not refuse me, I entreat you. It is that you should take my little girl. I will provide her with a servant, and all things necessary, but I would like to have her trained to a better and loftier womanhood than ever her poor mother knew, if she is not already ruined. I know it is a great thing to ask."

"And I accept frankly," Clyde answered. "I will do my best."

She returned to the quiet and seclusion of Aunt Sherman's cottage. A hard task she found it in many respects, but love gave her courage and strength.

You know how it ended. Robert Halford fully satisfied the demands of custom before he sought Clyde for himself.

"If I had said these words years ago, standing here!" he exclaimed, with a touch of the deepest reverence. "Oh! why are we so blind!"

Clyde sighed a little, thinking, womanlike, of the wasted years. They had come to a more perfect happiness, it was true, but did that make amends?

"I always suspected that he liked you," said Aunt Sherman. "If you had been bright you would have taken him before."

Could she have helped or hindered? Would June roses be as sweet in autumn? A. M. D.

#### GUN-MAKING.

GUN-MAKING is one of the leading businesses in Birmingham, where it has been carried on for nearly two hundred years. So far back as 1812 and 1813 guns were produced there at the rate of one every minute, and that rate can now be exceeded when necessary. The manufacture is very much subdivided, occupying many distinct trades. Moreover, it has for some time been carried on by machinery, on the interchangeable principle (introduced from America), whereby any part of one gun will fit any other gun—a highly economic plan, like Robert's system of templates and gauges, by which any part of an engine or tender is made to fit every similar engine or tender; and like Maadslay's system of uniformity in other machinery, and Whitworth's plan of resemblance and gradations of size in all branches of the mechanical arts.

All guns for the army are inspected at the Government View Rooms. These are now made by the Small Arms Company, an association of Birmingham gun manufacturers formed in 1864, who make also for foreign governments, and have a large establishment at Small Heath, near Birmingham. The several parts are first examined separately, and accurately gauged; they are then returned to the gunmaker, who proceeds to set them up. At every stage of this process the guns are taken for examination to the View Rooms, and at each view the examiner strikes his mark on the part tested, so that a gun, when completed, has more than twenty such marks.

No barrels are made in England except in Birmingham and its immediate neighbourhood. The barrels are either hammered from sheet-iron into shape on a mandril, or twisted on a rotating rod; straightened, bored, ground or turned, proved, and polished. A military barrel must be bored with such "truth" that it will just receive a plug of 377 thousandths of an inch, and is condemned as useless if it will take one of 580 thousandths. The straightness of the barrel is found by a test that, as a secret, would be worth many thousand pounds, though it was sold by the discoverer for "a mess of pottage." The barrel-setter stands in front of a window, and causes the shade of its upper edge to traverse the tube, which brings all its irregularities to view as he looks through it.

By Act of Parliament the strength of every barrel made in England must be proved, and certain descriptions must be twice proved, in the proof-house at Birmingham, or in that of London, before issue to the public. This is done by loading and firing them with a charge five times as heavy as they are ordinarily expected to carry. Some, as may be supposed, explode under the trial; as to the rest, they are laid aside for awhile, and then minutely examined. Should there be a flaw in them, the saltpetre in the proving powder will after a few hours discolour the outside of the barrel. If there appears, however, to be anything amiss which the saltpetre has failed to bring out, the tube is filled with water, and a ball larger than the bore hammered into it. This compresses the water so violently that if there be the slightest crack it oozes through and betrays the unsoundness.

As to the stocks they are of beech and of walnut, the former grown in England, and used only for cheap guns; the latter imported from Italy, where one Birmingham contractor established saw-mills, and in a few years converted into gun-stocks nearly 100,000 trees.

The locks, pins, swivels, etc., are made in Birmingham, and, altogether it would appear that about 600 manufacturers, and 7,000 workpeople, are employed there in the gun trade, many of the "hands" being boys, and some few of them women; the latter are occupied in barrel-boring and polishing. From 100,000 to 150,000 of the old flint, bright-barrelled muskets are annually made in Birmingham for the African trade, which dispenses with modern improvements; and no ship's cargo for the West Coast is thought complete without a supply of them. The orders are received from the merchants of London and Liverpool; who barter the guns on the African Coast for ivory, spices, gold-dust, etc. It is said that many of these guns find their way to Brazil, and that the Brazilian slave-traders carry on an extensive business with some of the African kings and chiefs by exchanging guns for men. When this traffic was legal in England a Birmingham gun was the common price for a negro.

THE question of lighting London a little better than at present is at last under serious consideration. Nothing will come of it.

A COLLECTION of works of art and industry made



by the Germans resident in China and Japan has been sent to Berlin, and has been placed at the disposal of the Crown Prince. It consists of more than 3,000 different objects.

## FACETIA.

MRS. MALAPROP has lately been studying Latin, with success. But, as a good churchwoman, she cannot hold with the rule *Festina lente*. She disapproves of feasting in Lent.—*Punch*.

LOSE NOTHING FOR WANT OF ASKING.

Port Housemaid going for her "Sunday out": "Oh, Miss Laura, it's beginnin' to rain! Would you ask yer ma to lend me her umbrella. Mine's broke, and cook's ain't quite good enough!"—*Pun.*

INTERESTING DEVOTEES.

Theresa: "No, Charles—never! I have long determined to devote my life to charity; in fact, to become a sister in an Anglican nunnery."

Charles: "Well, if you do, I'll bury myself for the rest of my miserable days in a—in a—a—monastery!"—*Punch*.

A MATRIMONIAL FIELD.—"Lovely women" desirous of getting married should not blush unnoticed in this overstocked country. Let them go to Lima, in Peru. There they have a splendid field of operation for the exercise of their charms. According to recent statistics Lima has a population of 100,000, which includes 33,704 more males than females!

DOCTORS IN COURT.—Medical men, experts and others, in the witness-box, are unfortunately apt to use technical terms for which there are no equivalents in plain English. For this pedantry the judges usually snub them. Quite right. There are no hard words or phrases of which the use, by judges or counsel, is sometimes unavoidable in law.—*Punch*.

THE CONNOISSEURS.

Groom: "Wher's beer do you like best—this 'ere hom'brewed o' Flisk's, or that there ale they give yer at the 'White Ho's'?"

Keeper (critically): "Well, o' the tow I prefers this 'ere. That there o' Wum'oods's don't fare to me to taste o' nawthin at all. Now this 'ere dew taste o' the cask!"—*Punch*.

TRUE THOMAS OF CHILSEA.—It was Mr. Carlyle who first revealed the existence of Phantom Captains, which many people refused to believe in, and laughed at the notion of. What do they say now that a board of captains in command over captains and admirals too is called by its own secretary a Phantom Board? Surely that Thomas of Chelsea is a true seer, and long since saw through simulators which have, in truth, at last been discovered to be transparent sham.—*Punch*.

SCIENCE GOSPEL.—Professor Agassiz has discovered a "fish which builds a nest." Wonders are only just beginning. Other professors, envious of Agassiz's good fortune, will be stimulated to renewed study of the animal kingdom, and the result will be that at no distant day we shall see the great zoological collections, here and in America, enriched by the addition of a glowworm which lives in a hive, a tortoise which hops from bough to bough, an oviparous rabbit, and a lobster whose diet consists exclusively of salad. The fable which deluded our childhood may yet be realized, and pigeon's milk take its place among the common articles of a free breakfast table.—*Punch*.

NOT EXACTLY.—"Well!" said the traveller to his persistent questioner, "about two years ago business called me to the North of England. It was a long journey, and my stay would be long. So said I to myself it will be best to get them sold." "What, your boots?" "No, not exactly. My furniture." Having made all my preparations, I made my way to the quay and rode—"In a box?" "No, not exactly—on horseback. I had not got very far on my way before I met with a tremendous fall!" "Off your horse?" "No, not exactly; a fall of snow. Then it turned to sleet, and, finally, to a regular flood of rain. I was getting wet through, so I made up my mind to put up—"Your umbrella?" "No, not exactly. My horse at an inn. There in the quiet of my chamber I looked over the papers connected with the sale of my goods and chattels. I made a discovery. I found I had sold what did not belong to me—"Your landlord's property?" "No, not exactly. I've sold you! Good morning!" And he walked out, leaving his inquisitive interrupter in a state of collapse.—*Fun.*

GUILDED LADIES.

Ladies, look at this proposal to promote what some of you may call the millineryennium:

"A Guild of Ladies is proposed to be formed to promote modesty of dress, to do away with extravagance, and substitute the neatness and sobriety suitable to Christian women."

A guild formed to promote the sobriety of women ought to have Sir Wilfrid Lawson for a patron, and should be supported by every teetotaler now living

in the land. But the sobriety here mentioned is that of dress, not drink; and total abstinence from finery and flummery of fashion is doubtless the chief aim of the promoters of the guild. Well, if they succeed in reducing even chignons to reasonable dimensions they will deserve the thanks of every one afflicted with good taste, and if they further are successful in reducing the enormous bills which ladies owe their milliners they will earn the heartfelt gratitude of many a poor husband, who can ill afford to pay them. All is not gold that glitters, but we may guess there is true metal, and not merely specious glitter, in these Guilded Ladies.—*Punch*.

EMBARRASSING SITUATION.—It is said that recently a sporting clerk handed the wrong paper to the curate to announce the singing of a new anthem. The unfortunate occurrence commenced thus: "Jerry," when, feeling annoyed at the leader of the choir for writing so briefly and irreverently, the curate added, "The words of the anthem are from the book of Jeremiah." With another glance at the paper, he proceeded hurriedly in the manner of one wanting to get rapidly through some formal business—"A 2 to 1 taken!—ahem! From the 1st to the 3rd verses are taken. Fifth heat, 25 yards start!—ahem!" Fortunately for the reverend gentleman, at that moment the choir started with a grand burst, and he sank to his seat utterly appalled by the discovery that his unlooky clerk had handed to him a wrong paper, and instead of the words of the anthem he had been announcing to a remarkably attentive congregation several of the particulars connected with a forthcoming race, in which one of the competitors was the clerk's dog Jerry.

## MY OLD-FASHIONED MOTHER.

THANK God for an old-fashioned mother,  
The gentle, sweet-voiced one,  
With the tender eyes, in whose clear depths  
The love-light ever shone.

Thank God for an old-fashioned mother,  
Whose silver-threaded hair  
Was smooth upon her faded cheek—  
Faded from age, not care.

I remember how her dear hands  
Guided my tottering feet—  
How she chided me when erring,  
In low accents, sad and sweet.

Yes, weary years have passed since then,  
But still lives memory,  
And like the perfume of wild flowers  
Thoughts of her come to me.

Other faces are forgotten,  
Other voices long are lost;  
But I seem to hear her soft tones  
When in peace or tempest-tost.

Years have filled great depths between us  
Since she went to live above;  
But they have not hidden from me  
All her pure, unselfish love. M. E. T.

## HOUSEHOLD TREASURY.

NEW WINTER SALAD.—The blanched leaf of the chicory has been a favourite ingredient in our winter salads, because of its elegant appearance and peculiar flavour, which forms a good balance to the pungency of small salading. It is, however, likely to be superseded, for in Stuart and Mein's improved thick-leaved dandelion it has a formidable rival. This form of, in some respects, most objectionable weed has very large and thick leaves, which from good crowns are produced very abundantly for a considerable period in the winter. The flavour is decidedly superior to that of chicory, and it is so much liked at our tables that its culture will be extended. To be of much service it requires cultivating in much the same manner as chicory. The soil must be moderately rich, and the plants have plenty of room for the development of the leaves. Sown in drills two feet apart, and thinned out to a distance of twelve or fifteen inches apart in the rows, it will do well, and grow to an enormous size by the autumn. In October the roots are taken up, and laid in by their heels in a convenient situation, and thence drafted into the mushroom-house as required. The outside leaves are removed when the roots are taken up, but it does not appear desirable to trim all the leaves off until taken in doors. In gathering the leaves they should be removed carefully, and as near the crown as possible, with the hand; for when cut off with a knife the undeveloped leaves will also be destroyed. The roots simply require stacking up in one corner of the house with a little soil between them. The place in which it is forced must of course be quite dark; but an ordinary forcing-pit, or other structure, in which a temperature of

about 70 deg. is maintained, may be made available by putting the roots in a box and covering it over to effectually exclude the light. The thick-leaved dandelion originated, it appears, with the Messrs. Vilmorin, of Paris; but Messrs. Stuart and Mein were the first to introduce it to the notice of cultivators in this country, it having appeared in their seed catalogue for 1869.

## STATISTICS.

CENSUS OF GIBRALTAR.—The returns of the census, taken on the 2nd of April last, of the civil and military population of the city, garrison, and territory of Gibraltar, which have just been published for general information, show an increase, as compared with the census of November, 1868, of 633 as regards the civil and 153 in the military population, the numbers being:—1868: Civil, 18,063; military, 6,398; total, 24,431. 1871: Civil, 18,695; military, 6,521; total, 25,216. The increase in the civil population, says the *Chronicle* of the 16th January, may be partially accounted for by the arrival of 375 convicts and 46 natives of Malta, who have of necessity or by choice taken up their residence here since the 11th of November, 1868. The births during the period from this last-mentioned date to the 2nd of April, 1871, were 1,112, and the deaths 1,198. The natives of the United Kingdom number 1,816, or 50 less than in 1868; the natives of Malta are 223, and their issue, born in Gibraltar, 102; the natives of Gibraltar, their offspring, and the native offspring of aliens amount to 12,567, of whom 7,750 own native, and 4,787 alien, fathers. Of the present civil population—18,695—8,967 are males, divided into 5,810 single, 2,783 married, and 374 widowers; and 9,728 are females—viz., 5,848 single, 2,618 married, and 1,263 widows. Again subdividing these totals according to their creeds, we find the following result:—Protestants: males, 1,092; females, 699; total, 1,790. Roman Catholics: males, 7,144; females, 8,198; total, 15,342. Hebrews: males, 767; females, 766; total, 1,533. Mahomedans: males, 26; females, 2; total, 28. Greek Church: females, 2. Besides these there are in Gibraltar, on an average, every day about 750 market people, who, as they leave the garrison before first evening gun-fire, are not included in the census.

## MISCELLANEOUS.

It is estimated that it will cost 70*l.* a night to light the new opera-house.

THE Gallery of Apollo, in the Louvre, which was closed in August, 1870, has been reopened.

PRINCE ARTHUR of England has received the order of the Black Eagle of Prussia.

PRINCE HASSAN, son of the Viceroy of Egypt, has arrived in Oxford, with his suite, to resume his studies at the university.

COLONEL LORD ALFRED PAGET has obtained the rank of major-general. The noble lord holds the appointment of clerk-marshal in the Royal Household.

TUESDAY, the 27th of February, is fixed for the Queen's visit to St. Paul's on the occasion of the thanksgiving services for the recovery of the Prince of Wales.

It is stated that the "Victoria and Albert" yacht is being got ready to convey the Prince of Wales to Madeira and the Mediterranean in April, if he be well enough to undertake the voyage then.

The patriotic subscription by the women of France is going to be an enormous one. The National Assembly will take the matter up. One lady has sent 100,000 francs and a diamond necklace.

THE ECLIPSE AND THE COOLIES.—In a description of the circumstances under which the Eclipse Expedition under Mr. Lockyer made its observations at Canonore, in the East Indies, one of the party says: "The swift-darkness was very solemn, and you may believe that all the natives left work and hurried into our observatory; for either through the Englishmen on the coffee plantations, or as they say from their own astronomers, they knew that the eclipse was coming. Round about in the plantations the Coolies beat tom-toms and made a terrible row, for the serpent Bahoe is about to devour the sun, the great God they worship; and, although Bahoe lies coiled round the world to keep it together, which on the whole he does very fairly, yet guns and tom-toms shall, if possible, keep him from swallowing the sun. Wild cries, shouts, yells of grief, arose round the hill where our observatory stood, and a body of native police, under Head-Constable Morley, a half-breed, kept the Coolies from farther demonstrations. Some premature and unfortunate births, which have lately taken place at Manantoddy—and such affairs, I hear, often do accompany eclipses—are attributed to the attempt upon the life of the sun-god by this big serpent, Bahoe."

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## NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

ALPHA.—The age is much too young.  
 J. O. V.—The description is far too indefinite.  
 E. H.—You yourself must make the selection.  
 HETTY.—What is termed a double response cannot be inserted.  
 CORA.—Such purely personal questions cannot be answered.  
 S. E. G.—We really do not know; perhaps some tobaccoist could furnish you with the information.  
 SPARKER JACK and BUSTING JACK.—The particulars are not sufficiently detailed.  
 ROBERT H.—The announcement is premature; wait till the "year's time" alluded to has expired.  
 H. J. N.—We are obliged by your offer, but are afraid the lines are not suitable.  
 CECIL M.—We can say nothing definite upon the subject until we have leisure to peruse the manuscript.  
 E. M. B.—Any information that we are able to give our correspondents is communicated free of charge.  
 ANNE J.—The words are thus translated: "Who shall separate us?"  
 S. H.—Your views cannot possibly be forwarded, because you have omitted to say to whom you respond.  
 M. A.—A tradesman generally looks for maturer years than the number you can count in his "partner for life."  
 NELLIE is recommended to resume her occupation as a teacher, and to let the other matter stand over for the present.  
 M. M.—Both communications were overlooked at the time of arrival, and their insertion would now be useless.  
 IMPATIENCE.—Upon a proper application being made to the Court of Chancery the legates would obtain speedy relief.  
 A. W. W.—We think you must consider your attempt unsuccessful; at all events, we can do nothing more for you.  
 ANNE.—No one can make you pay a tax imposed upon another person's animal. You may, therefore, dismiss any such fancy from your mind.  
 MAGGIE.—We believe we are correct in saying that the affair was finally settled before your second letter arrived.  
 BENJAMIN R.—An agent under such circumstances cannot be heard. Moreover the descriptions are exceedingly meagre.  
 JANETTE.—The age is unsuitable. Such young ladies should fairly consider the cares which matrimony inevitably creates.  
 R. A. R.—We do not undertake to return manuscripts, even if stamps are enclosed. If accepted, payment is made in money or by cheque.  
 LILLY and LEAH.—Surely, with such good connexions, such handsome features, and such an ample fortune, you are well able to dispense with our humble services.  
 H. B.—The description of yourself and friend is inadequate. No one can form an accurate idea of the appearance of either of you from a perusal of your letter.  
 J. B. V.—The "prospects" may be called good, but inasmuch as it is admitted that you are not in a position to keep a wife it is useless to take any action in the matter at present.  
 H. E. J.—You could not hear to pine away at home, while "he" was necessarily absent abroad in the performance of his duty. Years must elapse before such patience can be expected from you.  
 T. L.—There is a great deal of nonsense in your composition, and not a ray of promise in the shape of compensation. 3. The handwriting is good, and is adapted for bookkeeping.  
 MAUD and MAGGIE.—Some error has been made through different individuals using the same names. It is necessary that some distinguishing initial should be appended.  
 SAMUEL H. H.—There is a great deal of true pathos in the lines; they are carefully and accurately written, and upon the whole may be characterized as exceedingly good.  
 NEMO.—It is advisable to defer such considerations until your habits become more settled and the provinces have been "done." Yours is one of the few cases of which it may be said "Time enough yet."  
 L. P.—It is impossible to judge without personal. There are many such things on our table waiting their turn.

Before you send read our regulation on the subject printed at the bottom of this page.

Non.—The first thing necessary to strengthen the voice for singing is to keep the tone of the general health as high as possible; the second thing is constant daily practice under the supervision of a competent instructor.

MAUD G.—We are aware of the aversion which many ladies have to tell their age, but there are occasions when such a knowledge, or some idea of it, is absolutely necessary. How can "Sidney" make even an approach to a decision if upon this point he is kept in the dark?

A LOVER OF MUSIC.—Such an amount of practice would not be injurious if the individual is constitutionally adapted to the instrument. If, however, his health is not robust he should choose an instrument or a profession more conformable to his physique.

BLANCH.—1. The handwriting, though very pretty, is much too faint. Probably your pen and ink were at fault. 2. We cannot accommodate you by reprinting the words of an old song in this place. You should purchase them at a music-seller's.

A. K. W.—If the extracts from the English classic authors you have sent are to be regarded in the light of specimens of handwriting, the writing must be pronounced very bad. You should also follow the authors' method precisely, and not jumble his lines confusedly together.

PARR (Blackburn).—Mr. Tisard, a great authority in the art of brewing, says that good porter can be made from the mixture of five parts of black malt with ninety-five parts of amber malt. The use of the black malt renders the addition of any colouring matter unnecessary. The temperature of the water let into the mash-tub should be about 162 degrees; it is therefore usual to heat the water in the boiler to between 170 and 180 degrees. It is impossible within the limits of an answer of this kind accurately to describe the complete process of brewing, which is divided into at least half a dozen parts, namely, mashing, boiling, cooling, fermenting, cleansing, and storing. An amateur will find the apparatus expensive, and should be advised to secure the assistance of a practical and experienced man.

## FAREWELL.

Farewell, farewell, the ties that bound us,  
 Each to each, are severed now,  
 And the light that hope threw round us  
 Vanished with thy broken vow.  
 Years of trial would have proved us  
 Faithful, true, and constant still,  
 And through life I would have loved thee  
 In each change of good and ill;  
 Yet, by thee despised and slighted  
 For another dearer now,  
 Thou hast broken each fond vow;  
 Thy desertion I love must sever,  
 From thy presence I depart,  
 But I lose with thee my heart,  
 All the sunlight of my heart.

SAMUEL H. HARRIS.

R. S.—The budget received from you, containing the "Delaware" and other poetical effusions in manuscript and print, is a better budget than many you have sent, but yet fails to produce that change in our opinion which you seem to consider desirable. As for the manuscript pieces, we cannot discern anything either in their treatment or subject which would awaken any interest in the public mind, and though upon such a subject we are sorry to differ from our contemporaries we must say that the printed verses are such that we could not conscientiously have admitted to our pages. Take for example the tribute to Richard Cobden. The fourth line of the first verse is out of taste, and, far exceeding the bounds of poetical licence, is almost without meaning; the seventh line of the same verse is ungrammatical; the commencement of the second and third verses is even for a laudatory ode, grossly exaggerated, it being also difficult to attach a meaning to the second line of the third verse; and, to forbear, the personal pronouns in the last stanza are inelegantly placed and confused. The memory of a great and good man should at least have received more careful treatment. You appear to allow the fervour of your imagination to run away with you, and to neglect to adopt such an orderly method as a patient industry, by bringing which to bear upon your other talents you might perhaps be able to strike a chord in your readers' hearts which would sound in unison with the warmth of feeling by which your own nature is evidently often pervaded.

CLAUDIA, twenty-one, medium height, fair, and loving. Respondent must be tall and affectionate.

J. W., twenty-nine, tall, dark, good looking; has been in the Navy. Respondent to be tall, good looking, and domesticated.

MARY W., a domestic servant, twenty, medium height, dark brown hair and eyes. Respondent must be tall, dark, and loving.

COMPASS, a sailor in the Navy, twenty-six, 5ft. 6in., dark, and handsome. Respondent must be quiet, loving, fond of home, and good looking.

ELISE LISTON, twenty-one, a little English girl with a clear brunette complexion, laughing grey eyes, and winning ways. Respondent must be a tall, dark English gentleman.

O. P., a widower, twenty-seven, medium height, brown hair and eyes, musical, and fond of home. Would like to marry a quiet, homely person of about twenty-five; a widow preferred.

BUSY BODY, thirty, rather short and stout, good looking, domesticated, and fond of home. Respondent must be a dark, good-looking gentleman between thirty and forty.

LOTTIE, a widow with one child, twenty-three, rather tall, brown hair and eyes, loving, domesticated, and fond of home. Respondent must be tall, dark, affectionate, and loving.

EYES RIGHT, thirty, 5ft. 7in., blue eyes, of a fair complexion, having finished his time, realized a little money, and, wishing to settle down, would like to correspond

with a young person of industrious habits, fond of home, and a loving disposition, with a view to matrimony; an affectionate heart preferred before a pretty face.

GUY, twenty-five, fair, sandy whiskers and moustache, loving, and fond of home. Would like to marry a fair, domesticated person; she must be musical and fond of home.

SUSAN F., a blonde, twenty, medium height, musical, loving, and domesticated. Respondent must be tall, good looking, musical, fond of home, and in a respectable position.

GOODY, nineteen, dark, black eyes and curly hair, good looking, and has good expectations. Wishes to marry a tall, fair gentleman of steady and temperate habits; a tradesman preferred.

B. H., thirty-two, medium height, very dark, brown hair and eyes, musical, and in a lucrative situation. Respondent to be a dark young woman, loving, domesticated, and fond of home.

ORNELIA, nineteen, short, dark brown hair, blue eyes, clear complexion, and loving. Respondent must be tall, dark, handsome, and in a position to keep a wife comfortably.

W. W., forty, medium height, black hair, brown eyes, well educated, loving, fond of home and children, and would make a devoted husband to an industrious, affectionate wife.

DORA, eighteen, tall, fair, blue eyes, golden hair, good looking, musical, and has a little money. Respondent must be tall, fair, good looking, musical, and have some money.

FRED M., a seaman in the Navy, twenty-seven, fair, and good tempered. Wishes to correspond with a young lady about the same age with a view to matrimony; a native of London preferred.

LOVING LOU, twenty, 5ft. 2in., dark hair, blue eyes, well educated, can play and sing a little, and thinks she would make a good wife. Would like respondent to be tall, dark, and in the scholastic profession.

HAROLD, twenty-two, 5ft. 5in., fair, good looking, good tempered, affectionate, and a gunner in Her Majesty's service. Respondent must be rather tall, genteel, loving, and cheerful.

LOUIE B., twenty-one, medium height, fair, fond of home, good tempered, small income; and LILLY B., nineteen, tall, dark, good tempered, and fond of home. The respondents must be dark, good looking, and good tempered.

EDITH and ISALINE.—"Edith H.," twenty, tall, dark, and good looking. Respondent must be a kind and affectionate man; a widower not objected to. "Isaline," nineteen, medium height, fair, good looking, amiable, a domestic servant, and has been in her present situation six years. Respondent must be a respectable mechanic, a few years older than herself, cheerful, and of a loving disposition.

## COM MUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

SIDNEY is responded to by—"Tilly," nineteen, tall, fair, and loving.

ROSELYN by—"Grace," twenty-two, medium height, good tempered, fair, and affectionate.

NERTA by—"A. B. C.," twenty-five, 5ft. 11in., dark, genteel, loving, and in a good position.

DOUBLE PINK by—"J. E.," twenty-one, 5ft. 5in., rather fair, blue eyes, loving, and has some money.

FELIX W. by—"Red Rose," rather short, dark, very dark eyes, good looking, fond of home and music.

LEAH by—"Edward S.," twenty-one, tall, fair, well educated, and good tempered.

CAPTAIN by—"Marion," who is tall, and would forward her carte on receiving his.

DARREN by—"Gipsy," eighteen, medium height, a brunette in a good position, and would make a loving wife.

AN IRISHMAN by—"LARRY," an Irish girl, twenty-one, 5ft. 4in., brown hair, blue eyes, good looking, and domesticated.

MATTHEW by—"H. J. C.," twenty-four, 5ft. 6in., rather dark, dark hair, brown eyes, a tradesman who would make "Mattie" a steady and loving husband.

JOHN GEORGE by—"Louise," a widow, twenty-four, medium height, fair, blue eyes, brown hair, domesticated, loving, and fond of home.

HONEST HEART by—"R. A.," twenty-three, tall, brown hair, good pianist, and can sing well, kind hearted, affectionate, lovable, domesticated, and with an income which will be increased on her wedding-day. "Letitia," twenty-two, 5ft. 2in., dark brown hair, blue eyes, can play and sing well, and would make a good wife to a kind husband; and—"Polly," twenty-seven, tall, graceful, blue eyes, brown hair, domesticated, a widow with a good home, and in other respects answers to his requirements.

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